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CAVALRY
OUTPOST DRILL

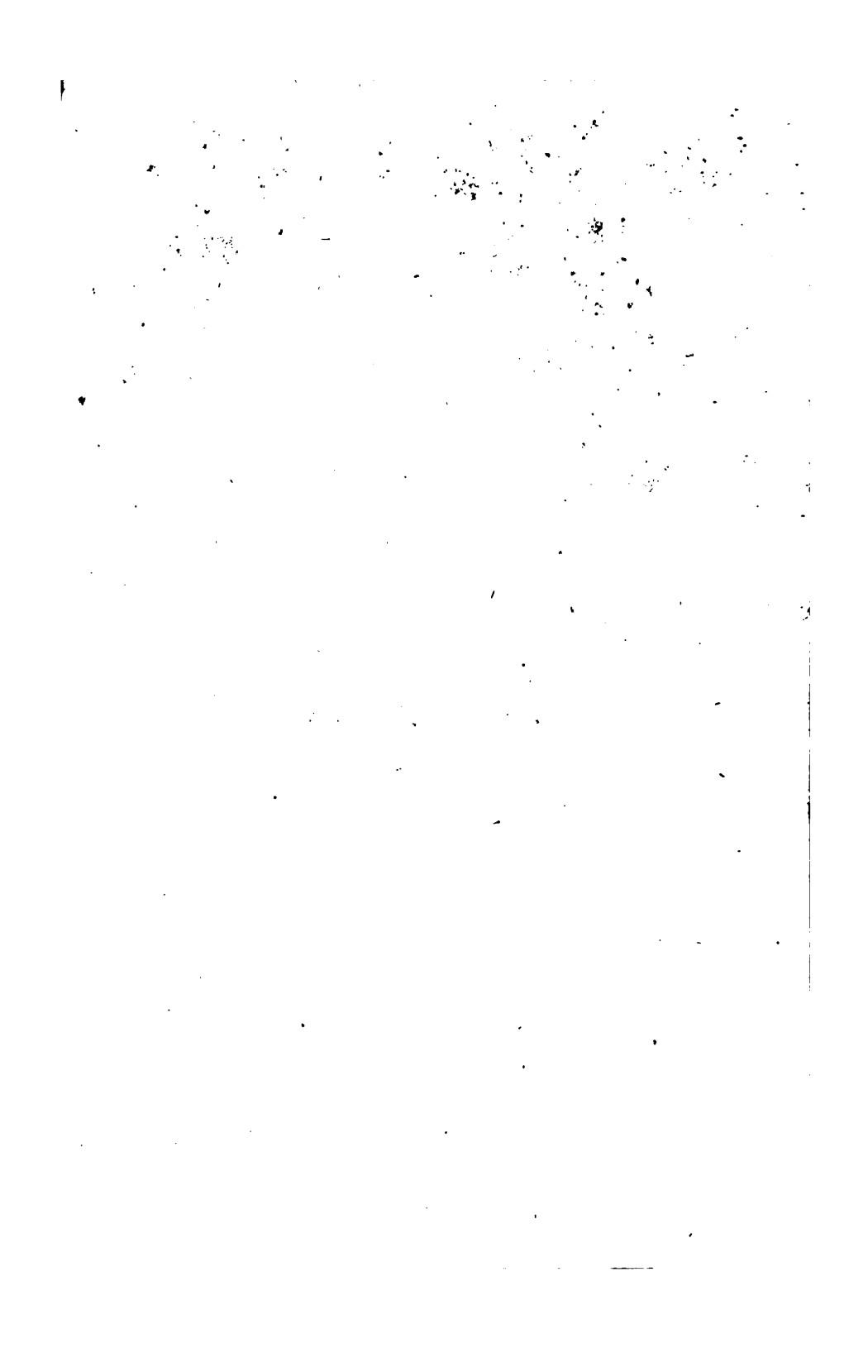
Major Gen. M. W. Smith



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CAVALRY OUTPOST DRILL.

LONDON
PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.
NEW-STREET SQUARE

CAVALRY OUTPOST DRILL.

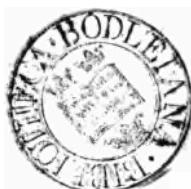
WITH A CHAPTER UPON

CAVALRY SKIRMISHING.

BY

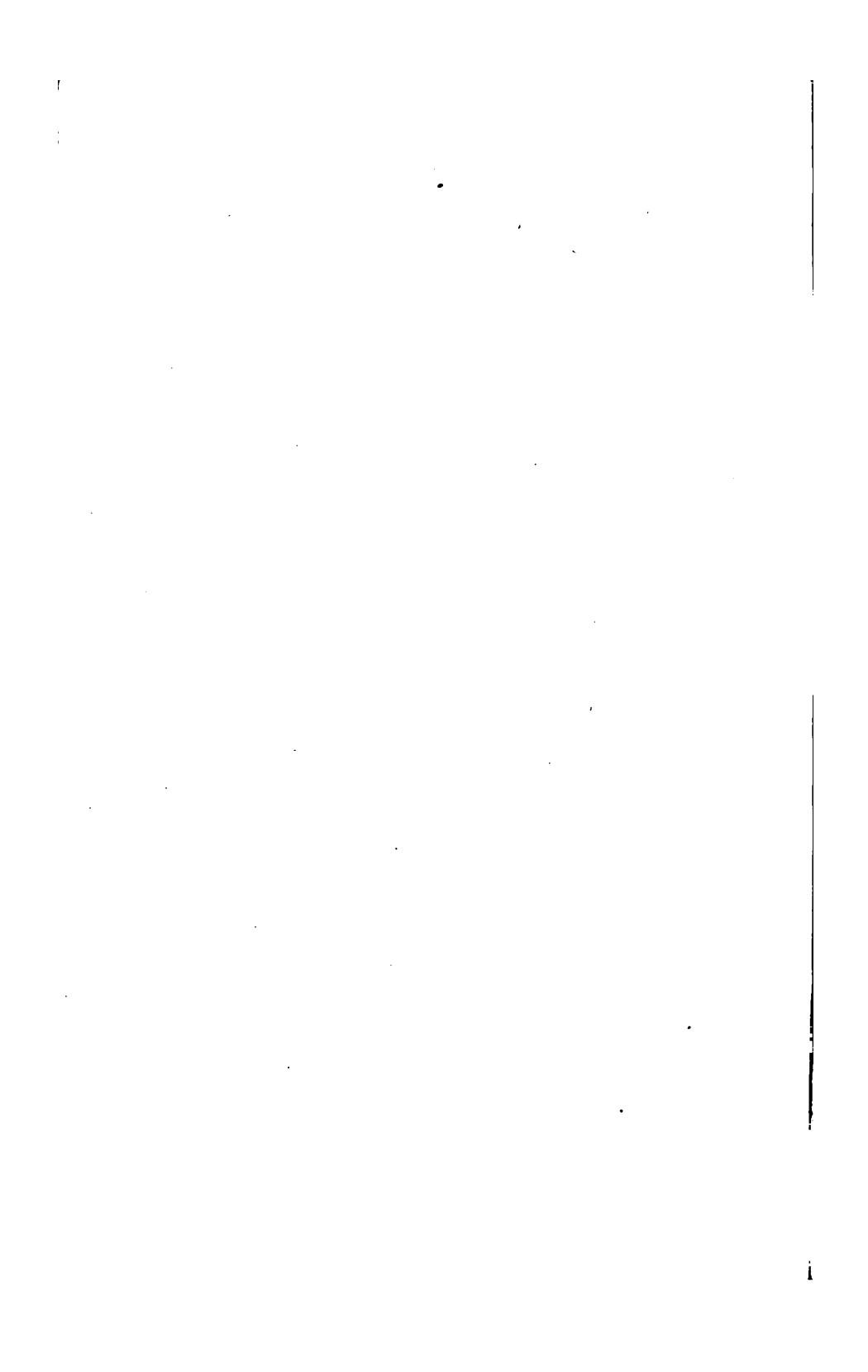
MAJOR-GENERAL M. W. SMITH, C.B.

LATE OF THE 15TH HUSSARS AND 3RD DRAGOON GUARDS,
MAJOR-GENERAL COMMANDING THE OSMANLI IRREGULAR
CAVALRY DURING THE CRIMEAN WAR, ETC. ETC.



LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
1867.

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INTRODUCTION.

THE general principles, as well as the details of outpost duties, are clearly and concisely pointed out in our Cavalry Regulations, Section XVI., page 220. There are also many good works published on the subject of outposts, and a young officer has every facility of making himself acquainted with this part of his duty, that is to say, with as much of it as reading can teach him ; but, many years ago, it struck me that there was a want of a preliminary drill for the non-commissioned officers and men, which should bring the general training up to the point from which the present instruction commences ; and to supply this want I wrote, and subsequently published, this little book, which I now republish. There is nothing in it which militates in any way against the present regulations. It has been in use in several regiments for some years, and has been approved of by the commanding officers as being a quick and simple way of instructing their men in outpost duties. There is no duty upon which men and officers can be employed where the ignorance or stupidity of one individual may work so much mischief as that of

outposts, and consequently it seems to me that not only should those in command be fully acquainted with the general principles and details, but those acting under them should know their work thoroughly well. I have had many years' experience in instructing men in these duties, and I have found that, having to deal with men of various capacities, there is nothing like an actual drill—teaching the movements and words of command &c. in all their details, and proceeding gradually from one subject to another, one being mastered before the other is entered upon; in short, upon the system of our present regulations with reference to all matters except outpost duties. In the first instance, a certain number of non-commissioned officers should be thoroughly instructed in all the details of the drill, working themselves in the ranks, acting as videttes, forming the patrols, &c. &c. By this means they will become practically acquainted with the system in all its details. They will then in their turn become instructors. The preliminary portion of the outpost drill can only be taught to small bodies of men at a time. If there were only one or two instructors much time would be occupied in teaching the men; but when a body of instructors is once formed who are well and practically acquainted with the system, having worked in the ranks themselves, many parties of men can be instructed at the same time, and the work will go on rapidly.

I have added a chapter on CAVALRY SKIRMISHING. I know it has been the received opinion for many years that

cavalry skirmishing is ineffective and useless, and that it is not considered correct to doubt the accuracy of this opinion established by long experience: however, judging from what I have seen myself, I cannot altogether subscribe to this doctrine. I think that, with some modifications of the present training and equipment, the cavalry skirmisher may be made more efficient than is generally supposed; and at the present time it is necessary that we should look about us and seize upon every means of opposing the preponderating power of the artillery, by increasing the efficiency of the other arms of the service. Greater efficiency in cavalry skirmishing might tend to this result; for if cavalry skirmishers can venture far enough, each man feeling confident of being able to defend himself independently in his retreat, being also able to use his weapons quickly and efficiently, they may do much mischief by sudden and daring attacks, and thus, to a certain extent, cripple and impede the action of the enemy's artillery. We also know what has been done by cavalry skirmishers acting on foot during the late American wars; * and this would lead to the conclusion that cavalry skirmishers should be so trained and equipped that they should be able to dismount without difficulty to act on foot; mount quickly if necessary, and have the full and efficient use of their arms when mounted in retreating upon the supports in the event of their being pursued. If this could be accomplished it would give the cavalry skirmisher much

* See Colonel Havelock's *Three Main Military Questions of the Day*. 8vo.
Longmans.

confidence in his own resources, and being able to retreat more quickly, he can approach nearer to the enemy than the infantry man, and if well-armed and trained, can act with nearly equal efficiency when the ground for action is reached. Whether this is the case or not, so long as we admit cavalry skirmishing into our regulations as a mode of fighting, it must be admitted that the cavalry skirmisher should be made as efficient as possible; and to this end I should propose some changes in our present system, which will be found detailed in the chapter alluded to.

CAVALRY OUTPOST DRILL.

LESSON I.

PATROLLING.

A BOUT a dozen men fall in, in two ranks, on the usual drill ground, the Non-Commissioned Officers in one rank in the rear by seniority from the right, dividing the ground equally, Serjeants and Corporals numbering off from the right of each rank. The Instructor then gives the word, 'No. 1 Corporal to the front,' upon which the senior Corporal reins back if necessary, moves round to the front, and halts opposite to, and facing the Instructor, ready to receive his orders. The Instructor then gives the Corporal the following order:—'Take out one file from the right flank as a patrol.' Upon receiving this order, the Corporal turns towards the party and gives the word—'One file on the right advance, march,' upon which the men move to the front. The Corporal then gives the word 'halt; spring arms;' and upon the arms being sprung, and having inspected the men, he goes to the Instructor of the drill, halts opposite to him as before, reports the patrol ready, and waits his orders.

The Instructor then gives him his orders as to the distance he is to go, according to the size of the drill ground, the direction he is to follow, and the pace at which he is to proceed.

Having received his orders the Corporal returns to the patrol, places himself on the left flank, gives the word 'walk' or 'trot,' according to the pace ordered, and then, giving the word 'march,' moves off in the required direction.

The Corporal, having pointed out to the front rank man the direction he is to take, halts himself, and orders the rear rank man to 'halt' also, until the front rank man has advanced about fifty yards or so. He then moves on, always keeping the advance file in view; the rear rank man keeps about twenty yards or so in rear of the Corporal.

The Instructor then moves up to the advanced file, and orders him in a low tone of voice, so as not to be heard by the rest of the patrol, to 'halt.' Upon receiving this order the advanced file halts and remains motionless.

Upon seeing the advanced file halt, the Corporal and the rear file should be instructed to halt also and remain still.

The Instructor should then order the advanced file to move forward again; upon seeing him do so, the Corporal and rear file move forward as before.

The Instructor then moving near the advanced file again orders him in a low tone of voice to halt, upon which he halts, and the remainder of the patrol also halt, as before.

The Instructor then orders the advanced file to make a signal; upon observing the signal, the Corporal moves up alongside of the advanced file.

The rear rank man must be instructed to remain where he first halted upon the signal being made, if he can keep the Corporal or advanced file in view, otherwise he must move on a little till he gets within sight of them.

The Corporal should then be instructed to send the advanced file a short distance to the front to observe.

Upon receiving this order, the advanced file moves a

short distance to the front, and then returns and makes his report to the Corporal ; but during the time of making his report the advanced file occupies the same position in which he first halted, and remains facing in the same direction towards which he was moving previous to the halt.

The Corporal should then be instructed to order the advanced file to proceed as before. Upon seeing the advanced file move forward, the rear file moves forward also; the Corporal halts till joined by the rear file at the usual distance, when the patrol proceeds as before.

The Instructor will then order the Corporal to make the signal to halt; upon which the patrol halts and remains still, the advanced file still looking to the front.

The Instructor will then order the Corporal to send the rear file a short distance to either flank to observe.

Upon receiving this order, the rear file moves a short distance to the flank ordered, then returns and makes his report to the Corporal ; and during the time of making his report the rear file occupies the same position in which he first halted, and remains facing in the direction towards which he was moving previous to the halt.

The Corporal should then be instructed to make the signal to halt, and immediately afterwards the signal 'files about.' Upon hearing this signal the leading file and remainder of the patrol turn their horses to the right about and move to the rear. The rear file thus becomes the advanced file in the new position, and the advanced file forms the rear guard.

The Corporal halts till joined by the rear file within the usual distance, when the patrol proceeds in the order which it has now assumed.

Upon approaching the party in returning, the Corporal makes the signal for the patrol to close; upon which the front rank man closes up to the rear rank man, who is then the leading file.

Upon the patrol coming in the Corporal forms his patrol to the right rear of the party.

The Corporal then moves up and makes his report to the drill Instructor ; and having done so he returns to his patrol and gives the word, ‘ strap arms—form on the right flank—walk, march ;’ upon which the patrol moves up in line, and the Corporal also falls in himself in his proper place.

What is aimed at in this first lesson of patrolling drill is—In the first place, uniformity of movement and words of command, &c., in taking out and bringing in the patrol.

In the second place, to teach the patrol to conform to the movements of the leading file. If the leading file should come within view of anything which he may consider doubtful, he halts, and also the remainder of the patrol, and remains still till he has satisfied himself as to what he has seen, when he again moves on, and the remainder of the patrol with him. On the contrary, if he cannot satisfy himself as to what he has seen, but still remains in doubt, he has learned a signal, by means of which he can summon the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding the patrol to his assistance. Holding out the right arm with the carbine would answer. I don’t like the plan of the chako on the top of the carbine, as it makes too much show to the front. Upon seeing the signal, the Non-Commissioned Officer should move up alongside of the advanced file, keeping as much under cover, and showing as little movement in doing so as possible.

In the third place, the Non-Commissioned Officer will have acquired the means of controlling the movements of the patrol by signal. The signal from rear to front must evidently be a signal by sound. We cannot employ Trumpets or Bugles on this service, and it therefore be-

comes a question what signal should be employed.—Any signal known to our own men which could be heard by them at comparatively short distances, but which would not attract the attention of the enemy, would answer. The light troops in our service used formerly to carry whistles attached to their belts for this purpose. Each troop might be furnished with a few for patrolling purposes, and the signals to ‘halt,’ ‘advance,’ ‘close,’ or ‘go about,’ could be easily formed.

These signals will enable him to halt the patrol, to move to the front again, and to retire the patrol when he may think it necessary or expedient to do so.

I have assumed that some signals, to answer these purposes, have been established; but if such should not be the case, the Non-Commissioned Officer must only approach the leading file, and give his orders to halt, move to the front, or retire, in as low a tone of voice as possible consistently with making himself heard, and the remainder must conform to the movement of the leading file.

This lesson may be taught either mounted or dismounted—the distances and movements will, of course, be modified according to the size of the drill-ground.

Each Non-Commissioned Officer, in turn, should be called upon to give the words of command and take out a patrol, and every individual composing the party should go through the drill in his own person; also a register of the men’s names should be kept in each troop, in order to ensure that each man shall pass through the successive lessons, for otherwise a man may be on duty when it comes to his turn, and in these matters one man who does not know his work, will throw out the whole.

During the drill, the Instructor should take any opportunities which may present themselves, to explain the meaning and intention of the movements, &c., to the men, either individually or collectively.

He should also explain that the short distances are only used in the preparatory drill, on account of the circumscribed space in which the drill is necessarily carried on, and also for the purposes of instruction, and in order to keep the movements as much as possible within view of the whole squad.

If possible, the Non-Commissioned Officers, while engaged in the preparatory drill, should attend the Regimental Office for an hour during the day to answer questions, and have the movements which they have practised in the morning thoroughly explained to them by the Adjutant, so as to ascertain that they fully understand the practical working of what they have been taught.

The men may also attend their own Troop Serjeant-Majors' quarters for the purpose of answering questions, and having the meaning and intention of the drill explained.

By this means a certain portion of the movements and details of the patrolling service will be acquired by the men previous to instructing them upon a more extended scale, and, consequently, the attention of the Instructor will not be distracted, or the men confused, by these minor details, when working the patrolling duties practically with more extended intervals on the roads or in the open country. These details will have been already acquired and have become a habit.

Upon the advanced file being sent to the front, or the rear file to a flank to observe, the Instructor should explain that the reason for doing so is as follows:—If there should happen to be rising ground, or any point from which a good view within a hundred yards or so of the patrol could be obtained, the Corporal might think it expedient to send a man in that direction to observe, to assure himself of the proximity of the enemy, or otherwise, as the case may be, the Corporal and the remainder of the

patrol, in the meantime, remaining where they first halted.

How the man should proceed when sent forward for the purpose above-mentioned, may be also explained, as it will prepare him for the practical instruction when patrolling on the roads or in the country.

For instance, he should be told that when sent out to reconnoitre in the way described, he should keep under cover as much as possible, and that in ascending a height, he should only go far enough to look over and avoid exposing himself and his horse on the summit.

When the man returns from making the observation ordered, it is laid down that he should, during the time of making his report, occupy the same position in which he first halted, before being sent to observe, and also remain facing in the same direction towards which he was moving previous to the halt.

The object and intention of this should be explained to the men, namely, that it is desirable that videttes, whether stationary or in movement, should always, during the time they are on this duty, remain constantly and unremittingly in observation of the space placed under their immediate surveillance, whether making a report, giving up or receiving orders, being relieved, &c., for until the relief is absolutely completed, unless they are despatched upon some other duty, to observe, make a report, &c., they are responsible that no party of the enemy shall approach over the portion of ground they may have been directed to watch.

If, therefore, their attention should be distracted, or their observation diverted from the proper quarter, while making a report, giving up or receiving orders, &c., a party of the enemy may, during the interval, suddenly appear from behind some cover, or even approach from a distant point, and gain a considerable distance without being detected, and much mischief may be done even during the few moments that the vidette is otherwise occupied.

CAVALRY OUTPOST DRILL.

LESSON II.

A BOUT a dozen men fall in, in two ranks, on the usual drill ground ; the Non-Commissioned Officers in one rank in the rear by seniority from the right, dividing the ground equally, Serjeants and Corporals numbering off from the right of each rank. The Instructor then gives the word, 'No. 1 Corporal to the front,' upon which the senior Corporal reins back if necessary, moves round to the front, and halts opposite to, and facing the Instructor, ready to receive his orders. The Instructor then gives the Corporal the following order :—'Take out two file from the right as a patrol.' Upon receiving this order, the Corporal turns towards the party and gives the word—'two file on the right advance, march,' upon which the men move to the front. The Corporal then gives the word 'halt; rear rank take order, march; spring arms;' and upon the arms being sprung, and the men inspected, the Corporal gives the word, 'rear rank take close order—march.' He then goes to the Instructor of the drill, halts opposite to him as before, reports the patrol ready, and waits to receive his orders.

The Instructor then gives him his orders as to the distance he is to go, according to the size of the drill ground, the direction he is to follow, and the pace at which he is to proceed.

Having received his orders, the Corporal returns to the patrol, gives the word 'advance by half sections,' 'walk' or 'trot' according to the pace ordered, and then giving the word 'march,' moves off in the required direction.

The Corporal, having pointed out to the leading front rank man the direction he is to take, should then be instructed to send the rear rank man to the right, and the next front rank man to the left, who should be taught to keep some forty or fifty yards on the right and left rear of the advanced file, keeping him always in view, halting when he halts, and moving forward again when he moves forward ; also, looking out to their own front and flanks.

The Corporal then halts, and orders the remaining rear rank man to 'halt' also, until the front rank man has advanced about fifty yards or so. He then moves on, always keeping the advanced files in view; the last rear rank man keeps about twenty yards or so in rear of the Corporal.

The Instructor then moves up to the advanced file, and orders him in a low tone of voice, so as not to be heard by the rest of the patrol, to 'halt.' Upon receiving this order the advanced file halts, and remains motionless.

Upon seeing the advanced file halt, the Corporal, the rear file, and the two flank files, should be instructed to halt also and remain still.

The Instructor should then order the advanced file to move forward again ; upon seeing him do so, the Corporal, rear file, and two flank files, move forward as before.

The Instructor then moving near the advanced file again orders him in a low tone of voice to halt, upon which he halts, and the remainder of the patrol halt also, as before.

The Instructor then orders the advanced file to make a signal ; upon observing the signal the Corporal moves up alongside of the advanced file.

The rear rank man must be instructed to remain where he first halted upon the signal being made, if he can keep the Corporal or advanced file in view from thence, otherwise he must move on a little till he gets within sight of them.

The Corporal should then be instructed to order the advanced file to proceed as before.

The advanced file moves forward, the flank files and the rear file move forward also; the Corporal halts till joined by the rear file at the usual distance, when the patrol proceeds as before.

The Instructor will then order the Corporal to make the signal to halt; upon which the patrol halts and remains still, the advanced file still looking to the front.

The Corporal should then be instructed to make the signal for the leading file to advance; upon hearing the signal the leading file advances, and upon seeing the leading file advance, the remainder of the patrol move to the front as before.

The Corporal should then be instructed to make the signal to halt, and immediately afterwards the signal 'files about.' Upon hearing the signal the leading file and rear file turn their horses right about and proceed to the rear.

Upon seeing the advanced file turn his horse and proceed to the rear, the flank files turn about inwards, and proceed to the rear also—keeping the file which was the rear file and has now become the advance file in view.

The Corporal now makes the signal 'files about' again, upon which the advanced and rear files go about and advance as before, upon seeing which the two flank files go about inwards, and proceed as before. The Corporal then makes the signal to close; upon which the leading file gives the signal, and the rear file trots up to the correct distance in rear of the advanced file. The Corporal also moves up to the left of the advanced file, upon seeing which the flank files immediately close into their proper places in rear of the advanced file.

The Corporal should then order 'files about,' upon which the patrol goes files about outwards.

The Corporal will then be instructed to distribute the

patrol as in advancing, forming it with advanced, flanking and rear files, and retire in this order—the file which was in advance forming now the rear guard. Upon approaching the party in returning, the Corporal makes the signal for the patrol to close; upon which the patrol closes as before.

Upon the patrol coming in, the Corporal forms his patrol to the right rear of the party.

The Corporal then moves up and makes his report to the drill Instructor, and having done so returns to his patrol, gives the word, ‘strap arms—advance by files from the left—form on the right flank—march,’ upon which the patrol moves into line, and the Corporal himself also falls in in his proper place.

The object of this second lesson, which is, up to a certain point, a repetition of the first, is to give an instruction which will enable the Non-Commissioned Officer in command to control the movements of a patrol when the flank files are out.

The movements of the flank files, as well as the remainder of the patrol, are made dependent upon the movement of the leading file. They are instructed to keep a little on the right and left rear of the advanced file—the distance they are to keep to the right and left of the advanced file is laid down at forty or fifty yards, but this only for the purposes of preparatory drill and instruction.

The distance in practice will depend upon the nature of the country and other matters. But whatever the distances may be, the flank files should be trained to keep so far in rear of the advanced file as to enable them, by a casual glance of the eye, to become aware of and conform to the movements of the leading file, and, at the same time, direct their observation within the quarter circle or other space which they may be ordered to observe.

The distances of the flank files from the advanced file and from each other depend upon the nature of the country, and must, consequently, vary as the ground alters. In the open country the interval should be as extended as possible, consistently with being within reach of the patrol, and keeping the advanced file constantly in view.

If the nature of the drill ground should admit of a preparatory drill instruction in this matter, this should be taken advantage of, and the flank file should be taught to close in when the ground narrows on one or both flanks, and to open out again as it opens without waiting for word of command or signal to do so.

Should the drill ground not offer facilities for this preparatory instruction, four men may be placed as markers to represent a defile through which the patrol may be supposed to pass, and by this means this preparatory instruction may be conveyed; but, as before, the meaning and intention of the movement should be explained as much as possible either during the drill or afterwards by the Adjutant or Serjeant-Major. It has been already stated that the flank files should be instructed to conform to the movement of the advanced file—to halt when he halts, and also to move on again when he moves.

The flank files may be supposed to be generally at such a distance as to place them out of the influence of signals by sound, unless such signals should be louder than it would be expedient to make them for the service of patrols.

But the advanced file of the patrol will be within reach of such signals made by the Corporal or other Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of the patrol; and in the first lesson it has been taught how these signals may be applied, and, as in the second lesson, the flank files have been instructed to conform to the movements of the advanced file. It is evident that the movements of the whole patrol, including

flank files, are placed under the control of the Corporal to the extent of halting, moving to the front, or retiring, but a signal for the purpose of closing the patrol becomes desirable.

For the reasons already mentioned it is evident that a signal by sound is inapplicable as far as the flank files are concerned ; it is laid down that upon the signal or order to close being given the advanced file shall make a signal.

I have already said that I shall assume that certain signals for these purposes have been determined—holding his carbine up might be considered a sufficient signal, but as this signal, whatever it may be, might not be immediately seen, or might be mistaken, I have added that the Corporal and rear file shall also close up. This cannot be mistaken, particularly as on the first halt of the advanced file the attention and observation of the flank files become directed to the quarter where the signal is about to be made. The pace at which the Corporal and rear file close up will be a guide to the flank files as to the pace they are to move at.

It is necessary for many reasons that the Corporal should have the power of closing in the patrol at once if he should consider it desirable to do so.

If he should think it expedient to retire a short distance previous to closing, he has the power of doing so, by first putting the patrol about, and then closing to what was the rear in the advance.

It should be explained to the flank files that in closing they should move under cover behind a ridge, along a hedge, or by any other means endeavour to conceal their movements from the front or side next the enemy as much as possible.

If either of the flank files should see anything he may think suspicious, he should halt. Upon seeing the flank

file halt, the Corporal makes a signal to halt the advanced file, and, consequently, the remainder of the patrol. If the flank file should be satisfied that there is nothing to apprehend from what he has seen, he moves on, and the Corporal moves the patrol on again as before, through the means of a signal to the advanced file. On the other hand, if the flank file should not be satisfied, but wishes the assistance of the Corporal, he makes the signal as laid down for the advanced file in the first lesson, and the Corporal moves up, &c.

This also may be practised and explained in the preparatory drill. The flank files, as well as the advanced or rear files in this lesson, may be sent forward by the Corporal to observe, attending to the rules already laid down in making their report upon coming in, &c.

Every opportunity should be taken to impress upon the men the necessity of concealing their movements from the front, and moving under cover in all cases as much as possible. When the men and Non-Commissioned Officers know their work so far, well, a Serjeant may be ordered by the Instructor to take out a patrol consisting of a Corporal and three or more files.

The words of command and movements will be the same as laid down for a patrol of a Corporal and two file or four men, except that when the advanced and flank files have been thrown out the rest of the patrol with the Corporal will remain in a body in files or fours, followed by the rear file at the usual distance.

Upon the advance or flank files signalling, the Serjeant moves up himself, leaving the patrol for the time being under the command of the Corporal.

Having in the first place arranged with the Corporal that upon his giving a signal, such as holding up his right arm or otherwise, the Corporal should immediately give the signal to close.

If the patrol should be large, the number of the Non-Commissioned Officers will be increased in proportion.

Also instead of a single advanced file a double vidette may be ordered to move in front.

If circumstances require, and the number of the patrol admits of it, additional flank files may be thrown out to one or both flanks. These additional files must move a little to the right or left rear of the flank files already out, so as to keep them in view by an occasional glance of the eye, and conform to their movements in the same manner as the flank files, already out, do to the movements of the advanced file.

This method will evidently still leave the control of the movements of the patrol to the necessary extent in the hands of the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding it.

It is plain that on the same principle any number of flank files which the patrol may be able to afford, or circumstances may require, may be added on one or both flanks.

The more retired from the front these flank files may be, and the smaller the arc of the circle confided to their observation, the more easy will it be to keep those files in view by whom their movements are to be regulated.

And on the other hand, the more they are advanced towards the front, and, consequently, the more obtuse the angular space they are to observe, the more difficult will it become immediately to detect signals and movements, but the more expanded will become the field of observation.

All this should be practised in the course of the 2nd lesson at the discretion of the Instructor, as it may be thought expedient with reference to the progress made by the men and other matters.

The whole should be accompanied, if possible, by verbal explanation of the meaning and intention of the different movements during the drill.

If additional flanking files should be sent out in the preparatory drill they should be instructed to close in or open out as the ground closes or expands without signal or word of command, and the same methods may be adopted in the instruction, as already indicated. If one or more of the flank files should be temporarily shut out from the view of the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding the patrol by inequalities of the ground, the intervention of rocks, trees, &c., a man should be sent forward a little in rear of the leading file to repeat the signal, &c.

If, during the march, the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding the patrol should think it necessary, and the numbers of the patrol should be sufficient to admit of it, he may detach from the main body one man or a file of men, or a Corporal with one man or a file of men, to any point where he thinks they may obtain a good view, either halting the remainder of the patrol till they return, or ordering them to rejoin him at some point on the march. This also may be practised and explained on the drill ground.

Much is here left to the discretion of the Instructor in conducting and practising the second lesson of patrolling; but if he is himself thoroughly acquainted with his own work and what he is employed to teach, he will find no difficulty in modifying and adapting the instruction to the capacities and acquirements of his pupils, as well as to the time at his disposal and the numbers he may have to teach.

There is no possibility of forming general rules applicable to all the cases which may occur, or adapted to the various and varying circumstances of such a service as that under consideration. It must be left to the individual intelligence of the actors in such a case (whatever may be the *rôle* they have to enact, whether that of commander or commanded) to combine, modify, and adapt their movements to the exigencies of the moment.

A man must have a natural turn and liking for this sort of work, or he will never take to it *con amore*.

From the men who possess this natural turn, and are adapted for the position in other respects, we should select our Instructors, and they will have no difficulty in seizing the spirit and meaning of what they have to teach, and in conveying the detailed instruction accordingly.

LESSON III.

THE party fall in, and the Non-Commissioned Officers number off as in the first and second lessons.

The Instructor calls a Serjeant to the front by number, and orders him to 'take out two Corporals and four (or more) files as a patrol, and maintain his communication with the party by means of intermediate files.' Matters proceed exactly as in the former lessons, except that one Corporal remains with the rear file.

Upon commencing to lose sight of the point of departure, the Corporal posts the rear file so as to retain it in view, and facing in the direction to be observed or watched. Upon the rear file being posted, the next file to the rear halts till the patrol has gained about thirty or forty yards, when he proceeds, keeping about that distance in rear of the patrol, but so as to keep it always in view—in short, takes the place in the patrol of the file just posted.

In the meantime the Corporal joins him, and as he begins to lose sight of the man last posted, posts him in turn in the same way so as to keep the man first posted in view—upon his being posted the next file falls out, halts till he gains his interval. The Corporal having posted the second file joins him and posts him in turn, and so on.

This should not be allowed to interfere with the working of the patrol as already laid down.

Should all the files be exhausted, the Serjeant should be instructed to halt the patrol and then send back the Corporal for another file or two, upon receiving which he proceeds as before.

Or else he may be instructed to send the Corporal back to remove every second man posted, the remainder getting orders to keep the points in view from which the men have been removed. This will enable the files remaining posted to direct anyone upon the road, followed by the patrol, and also to watch in the direction to be observed. The patrol then proceeds as before, and posts the additional men thus gained.

If there should be a sufficient number of Non-Commissioned Officers with the patrol, a second Corporal may be told off to assist in posting the intermediate files.

The mode of patrolling taught in this lesson will be found useful in connecting picquets together, as hereafter explained, when taking up ground for the first time.

If the usual drill-ground does not afford facilities for this practice, some road or ground in the neighbourhood of the quarters of the Regiment may be easily found adapted for the purpose, and the distance between the intermediate files can be regulated according to the space available.

When two picquets are posted, for the first time, upon new ground, it will evidently become desirable to establish a communication between them, and also ascertain the shortest and best roads for the patrols of communication to move by from picquet to picquet.

Picquets are connected along the outer chain of videttes by signal, and along the interior chain of picquets by means of patrolling: consequently, the necessity of establishing a communication as soon as possible.

The picquets are generally posted at about a mile apart, and, consequently, if patrols trained to work in the mode described in No. 3 lesson, be sent out from the flanks of each picquet in order to feel for similar patrols sent out from the adjoining picquets, each patrol will only have to

pass over a distance of about eight or nine hundred yards (half-a-mile). These communicating patrols may be sent out from all the picquets along the line at the same time ; consequently, by this mode of patrolling, the communication will be rapidly established and the roads reconnoitred along the whole chain of picquets.

It is hardly necessary to observe that, when this mode of patrolling is used in order to connect the chain of picquets, the intermediate files should be posted facing outwards, or in the direction of the ground supposed to be occupied by the enemy.

If the advanced and flank files do their duty properly, and the Non-Commissioned Officers are tolerably active in the matter, the patrols cannot fail to meet at once and form a junction. If the country should be difficult, or the weather unpropitious, and any difficulty apprehended on this account, the advanced vidette may be doubled, or the flank files augmented.

In the case of connecting the picquets upon the patrols meeting, and, consequently, the communication being established, both Serjeants halt their respective patrols, recall the advanced and flank files, which may be done by the signals laid down for closing patrols.

A Non-Commissioned Officer of each patrol will then be sent, accompanied by a Non-Commissioned Officer of the other patrol, along the line of intermediate files to their own picquet. By this means the whole line of communication between picquets will be known. They then return to the point marked by the Serjeants.

The Serjeants then post themselves as nearly as possible at the centre point between the two picquets with the portion of their patrols remaining (after posting the intermediate files) formed up, facing outwards, and remain ready themselves to afford any assistance or information which may be called for, to the Officer in posting his videttes or in other matters.

It is evident that the line of intermediate files may be used as a guide in posting the chain of videttes.

The Serjeants of the flank patrols will also move to the front, indicate the centre point, or nearly so, between the two picquets, and thus afford a sufficient guide as to the ground to be occupied by the videttes of each. Having done so, the Serjeant can wait the arrival of the officers with the videttes.

Without such a guide being quickly formed, much time might be lost in connecting the chain of videttes at once, so as to pass the signal from flank to flank along the whole line; and also the Officer, without such a guide, might occupy more or less ground with his own particular chain of videttes than belonged to him, and in consequence impose an undue share of what must always be an arduous duty upon the men of his own or another picquet.

If the ground permits, one Serjeant may proceed a few hundred yards to the front, to give any information he may have gained to the officers posting the videttes.

Those who have been employed in posting a chain of videttes in a difficult country, will know how necessary and desirable a guide in these points becomes.

The line of intermediate files will also serve temporarily as a line of videttes to watch the country and prevent any party of the enemy passing to the rear of the line of picquets, and also guard against a surprise during the time the regular videttes are being posted and other arrangements as to establishing the chain of outposts being made.

In lesson No. 3 it is laid down that, after the intermediate files being posted, every second man along the line may be removed if it should be found necessary to do so, the remainder being instructed to keep the points from which they have been removed in view, as well as to watch the intervening ground.

By this means the guide as to the road of communica-

tion between the picquet, as to posting the videttes, ground to be occupied, &c., will still remain as before; and an equal space is evidently occupied by half the number of intermediate files.

The Corporals having first learned this lesson in the way prescribed, may be ordered to post the intermediate file in the first instance, so as that each pair of intermediate files shall keep a common point in view. This method will evidently be found useful when the picquets are small, and the patrols obliged in consequence to work with reduced numbers.

In some cases, when picquets have been very much reduced in number, or strict watchfulness is not required, this method has been adopted, even in posting the chain of videttes; but it is evident that by so doing we sacrifice the power of passing the signal along the line.

When Non-Commissioned Officers and men thoroughly understand what is wanted, have seized upon the spirit as well as the letter of the instruction, clearly see the object aimed at, and have become expert in the details of practice, even a greater number of intermediate files may be dispensed with in these communicating patrols—a broken branch along the line to be passed, the tracks of the horses of the patrol, any pre-arranged signals, or any dodges or contrivances which may suggest themselves will be found sufficient, with the assistance of one or two men as intermediate files, to point out the roads or establish the communication.

This mode of patrolling and maintaining the communication with the point of departure, by means of intermediate files, will be also found useful in foggy weather, when so much may be done if we can only manage to patrol without losing ourselves.

For flank patrols of a column on the march in thick weather, the intermediate files may be used, each file, as

posted, turning and moving in the same direction as the column, if the ground is sufficiently open to admit of their doing so. This mode of patrolling may be also used at night, or under any other circumstances to which it may be found applicable.

It will also be evident how this mode of instruction might be turned to account in training the men to work or watch particular points on the road taken by a patrol, points in directions by which they might be cut off, or roads by which the report should be carried back to the picquet in ordinary cases, or forward to the patrol in case of the enemy appearing in rear; also for the purpose of marking cross-roads, bridges, turnings to be taken by the patrol in returning, or any points where there might exist an uncertainty as to the roads.

These sort of things will suggest themselves to any commander of a patrol with common intelligence, and are to be found repeated and dwelt on in almost all the works extant upon outposts. The only object of the present drill is to put in the hands of the commander of a patrol the power of executing, through the medium of those under his command, what his own intelligence or common sense may suggest, or the works alluded to above may enjoin.

In order to possess such a power, he must feel confident that a short and concise order will be clearly and fully understood—that the working and routine duties of the patrol will go on as a matter of course, without any orders or explanation at the time—that these points have been already acquired by all, and that each individual of the party may be depended upon to act upon a general system and understanding, even under unusual, unexpected, or unforeseen circumstances.

So far it has been supposed that the drill is carried on in the usual drill-ground, with reduced intervals and

distances; but there is hardly any quarter in which troops may be stationed where opportunities of practising the patrol duties cannot be found. Parties under qualified Instructors may be sent on the roads, or into the country, to put in practical application what has been acquired in these first three lessons.

The Instructors will take advantage of the nature of the country to practise as well as explain, and point out the meaning and intention of what the men have already acquired. To do this, it will not be necessary to go out of a walk, and the whole may be practised while exercising the horses.

For practice, two patrols may be sent by different roads, so as to meet, each patrol endeavouring to discover the other without exposing themselves; or one patrol may be ordered to follow another, after a certain interval of time, with orders to proceed a certain distance and report upon which road may have been taken by the first patrol, their numbers, &c. &c. This they must endeavour to ascertain by their tracks, or anything else they may observe.

Or two patrols may be sent from different points, to feel for each other, and endeavour to form a junction, and establish a communication between the two points of departure by intermediate files.

This may at first be tried in an open and easy, and afterwards in a closer and more difficult, country.

When out upon patrol, the Non-Commissioned Officers and men should be attentive to observe everything unusual, or which might indicate the movements or presence of the enemy, represented by other patrols.

These matters, whether by day or night, are fully detailed in most works upon outposts, and should be explained as much as possible to the Non-Commissioned Officers and men by the Instructor.

If a man's attention is alive to these matters, it is by

no means so difficult to detect many trifling circumstances from which conclusions may be reasonably drawn, more particularly when they are compared together, when it may be found that the first inference will be borne out by subsequent observation.

The glancing of light in the distance, the tracks upon the road or other ground, should be noted, and if tracks should be observed, there is no great difficulty in ascertaining whether they are fresh or old tracks. There is also no great difficulty in ascertaining which way the hoof marks are turned, which will point out the direction in which the party have gone. If both ways, it will show that the party have returned by the same road—the number of marks may give some idea of the numbers.

If the tracks turn off from the road, there is probably a party somewhat near under cover.

If a branch should be seen to move in a cover, when there is no wind to move it, it may be reasonably inferred that there is some living thing in the cover.

A fresh broken branch by the side of the road, fresh wheel tracks of guns, may indicate that troops have passed. This and many matters may be explained and pointed out by the Instructor, as anything upon the march or in the vicinity of the road may suggest them.

Upon the advanced file coming suddenly in view of the enemy, the best thing in most cases (as already stated) will be to halt and remain still, particularly under cover. Nothing attracts the eye from a distance so much as movement.

By this means, too, the file may get time to observe; and if the enemy is uncertain as to what he has seen, if there is no further movement in the quarter his attention has been directed to, he may consider himself mistaken, and give up observing that point, which will give an opportunity for the advanced file to retire or move into cover.

If the patrol should consist of six or eight file or more, in place of the advanced file two men may march in front, and at a greater distance, but always within view of the patrol.

In this case, upon meeting with a village, road, ravine, or cover of any kind, one man may move on and examine it while the other man keeps him in view. Upon coming to a hill or rising ground one man may ride nearly to the top and look over, taking the precautions generally laid down in works upon outposts, and, if nothing doubtful appears, he may remain at the top till joined by the other men.

Also, with patrols of certain strength, two men instead of one may be left to watch a bridge, ravine, or other point upon the road. In this case the road taken by the patrol may be easily marked by cutting off a branch here and there—one or two light hatchets strapped to the saddle in each troop might be found useful—by which means, together with the tracks of the horses, one of the men left in observation may follow the patrol should it be necessary to make any report, or by the same means a report may be sent back to the point from which the patrol started. This should be practised when the patrol has advanced a certain distance, by sending back the rear file with a report, either verbally or in writing, with orders as to what pace he is to proceed, and what road he is to take.

Upon the rear file being sent with a report, he should be immediately replaced from the main body of the patrol.

Of the patrols here treated of—namely, those sent out by the commandant of a picquet as a matter of routine—there are three kinds.

1. Visiting patrols or rounds, which visit the videttes at uncertain hours between reliefs, and which move by day generally along the rear of the line of videttes and at night along the front.

2. Communicating patrols, to learn the roads between picquets, and to communicate between them.
3. Reconnoitring patrols, which move out in any direction ordered, to search woods or enclosures, to feel for the enemy, and to gain intelligence, in case of an alert, or the signal being passed from another picquet to ascertain the cause, to learn the nature of the ground, direction of roads, &c.

It may not be always necessary to move with all the precautions as to advanced files, &c., indicated in the foregoing lessons. For instance, in the following cases these precautions might sometimes be dispensed with: visiting patrols during the day, moving along the rear of the line of videttes, communicating patrols between picquets after the videttes have been all posted, reconnoitring patrols previous to passing the line of videttes; but all this will depend upon circumstances, and must be left to the discretion of the Commandant of the picquet.

LESSON IV

POSTING VIDETTES.

A PARTY falls in on the usual drill-ground, as in the previous lessons.

An Officer will be directed by the Instructor to call No. 1 Serjeant to the front, and order him to 'move out a Corporal and four (or five) files to the front for videttes.'

The Serjeant proceeds exactly as in the case of a patrol.

When the videttes are reported ready, the Officer and Serjeant move to the right front to select a post for the right videttes.

The Corporal giving the word to the men for the videttes, 'Advance by half sections from the right,' places himself on the left flank of the leading file, gives the word 'walk' or 'trot,' and follows the Officer at a distance of about fifty or sixty yards, but so as always to keep him in view.

Having arrived near the point the Officer thinks likely to be suitable for posting the right vidette, he orders the Serjeant to halt; upon seeing the Serjeant halt, the Corporal and his party halt also.

The Officer then moves on and selects a post for the right vidette; having done so he makes a signal, upon which the Serjeant moves up to him.

The Corporal also sending one file to where the Officer has posted himself, remains steady with the remainder of his party.

The Serjeant then posts the file sent up by the Corporal at the point indicated by the Officer, according to the mode

laid down for posting videttes, also giving them their usual orders, to which the Officer, having added anything he may think necessary, leaves the Serjeant with the videttes just posted.

The Serjeant retires a few yards and then remains halted, facing towards the videttes.

In the meantime the Officer rides to his left, and selects a post for his next videttes on the left.

The space of the drill ground will most likely not admit of the distance between videttes being more than forty or fifty yards, and this will be sufficient for the purposes of preparatory drill; but it should be explained as usual to the Non-Commissioned Officers and men, that in practice, these, as well as other distances, will be increased according to circumstances and the nature of the country to be occupied.

As soon as the Officer has moved to his left, the Corporal gives the word to his party, 'walk,' or 'trot,' or 'gallop,' 'march,' according to the pace of the Officer, and moves also to the left, keeping always fifty or sixty yards to the rear, or nearer to the picquet than the Officer, and ordering his pace according to that of the Officer, but always keeping him in view.

As soon as the Officer has selected a post for his next videttes on the left where they can clearly distinguish the right videttes which have just been posted, and where to the best of his judgment they can be clearly seen by them, he halts himself, upon seeing which the Corporal halts his party until the Officer makes a signal as before; upon which the Corporal sends up another file to where he has placed himself.

The videttes move into the place indicated by the Officer, and remain steady, looking to the front.

The Officer retires a few yards and remains halted, fronting the videttes.

The Serjeant then moyes up to the right videttes, and if the left videttes can be clearly seen from the right he joins the Officer and reports accordingly.

But if the Serjeant should find that by moving the left videttes now being posted a few yards to the front or rear would bring him against the light and allow the right videttes to distinguish him clearly, he should be taught to intimate this by signal, as follows :—

If he finds that the left videttes should be moved a few yards to the front, he moves a few yards himself to the front and halts.

This will be a signal that the left vidette should be a little advanced ; when he sees the signal answered he rejoins the videttes and proceeds as before.

If he finds the left videttes should be moved a few yards to the rear, he puts his horse about and moves himself a few yards to the rear.

This will be a signal that the left videttes should be retired a little.

If these signals should not be found sufficient, the Serjeant must join the Officer and make his report accordingly.

On the open drill-ground, and at such short distances, the videttes will, of course, be clearly seen by the Serjeant and by each other.

But the object of the drill should be explained by the Instructor, and how it should be applied in practice pointed out.

The Serjeant having joined the Officer, gives the videttes last placed their usual orders, to which the Officer having added anything he may think necessary, leaves the Serjeant with the videttes just posted.

The Serjeant retires a few yards and then remains halted, facing towards the videttes.

In the meantime the Officer rides to his left and selects a post for his next videttes on the left.

These videttes are posted in the same way as the former, and so on until the three or four file taken out for videttes have been all posted.

It has been laid down in this lesson that the Corporal and his party shall keep to the rear, or nearer to the party or picquet than the Officer.

The object of this is to obviate as much as possible the necessity for a number of persons riding about along the line upon which the videttes are to be posted, and thus attracting observation from the front or side next the enemy.

It is intended that the Corporal and his party shall keep as much as possible behind cover consistently with keeping the Officer in view, or below the ridge of ground along which the videttes are being posted. By this method it is only necessary for the Officer to appear alone in the open, or above the ridge, in order to select the best points for placing the videttes; and as soon as he has done so the men for the videttes are moved up at once from the rear to their posts.

The Serjeant remains with the videttes last posted, in order to obviate the necessity of the Officer returning to the point where they are placed in order to ascertain if the videttes he is engaged in posting can be clearly distinguished from thence.

Having to return often in this way would occasion much loss of time, as those must be aware of who have ever tried it; but without the present arrangement of leaving the Serjeant with each vidette in succession, it would become absolutely necessary in most cases, for it by no means follows as a matter of course that because the right videttes are clearly seen from the left, the left videttes shall be as clearly distinguished from the right; on the contrary, many matters which it is impossible always to

take into account, besides the mere fact of the existence of intervening objects, may prevent this.

In order to avoid teaching too many things at once, which is confusing to the learners and laborious to the Instructors, it will be necessary before proceeding to the other picquet duties that this matter of posting videttes should be fully understood and the practice acquired.

In order to this, as in the case of the patrolling duties, the junior Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, and men should practise in the country what they have acquired the details of in the preparatory drill on the drill-ground.

As in the former case, the Instructors should, during this practice, take advantage of the nature of the country, or other circumstances or matters which may suggest themselves, to illustrate and explain the rules generally laid down upon these points in works upon outposts, which, if the Instructors have not the advantage of practical experience, they ought to study.

As to the distance at which the videttes should be placed from the party by which they are furnished, or by which they are to be supported, in most cases we may take about eight or nine hundred yards as the maximum; the rest must depend upon the nature of the ground, weather, time, &c. From this it follows that if the videttes are placed at a distance of more than eight or nine hundred yards from the picquet there should be a small post between the picquet and the videttes. It may in some cases be safer to place the videttes at a considerable distance, where they may have an extended view to their front, and where their own safety will depend upon their own watchfulness, than by drawing closer to the support restrict their view to the front; in which case the enemy may come down upon them before they have time to retire or give the alarm. And, on the other hand, cases may occur where it may be best to put the videttes close to the picquet; for

instance, where there is an elevation or rising ground near the picquet, from the summit of which the videttes may command the country all round.

As during the day the distance from the picquet at which a vidette should be placed depends upon his being seen from the party by which he is supported, and the report of his carbine being heard from the picquet so as to give time to mount and be prepared for an attacking enemy, it is evident that the distance must be modified by circumstances, nature of the country, state of the weather, &c.; it must depend in a great measure upon whether the country is open or close, whether the wind is blowing to or from the picquet, whether there is thick cover or rising ground between the videttes and the picquet which might impede the sound.

The mean distance will, therefore, mainly depend upon the following :—

The distance at which the report of a carbine can be heard in moderate weather.

The distance at which signals can be clearly distinguished by the generality of persons in a favourable state of the atmosphere.

The time required for a picquet, part of a picquet, or party of men, to stand to their horses, mount, and remain ready to receive an enemy.

The time occupied by an attacking party in passing over a given distance in good order, upon moderately favourable ground.

All these are circumstances which must modify the distance at which the vidette should be from the picquet. We may say, in general terms, that, under usual circumstances, the distance should vary from six or seven hundred to eighteen hundred yards.

The distance of the videttes from each other must also depend upon circumstances, state of the atmosphere,

nature of the country, &c. As a general rule they must be placed at such a distance that they can see clearly the signals which may be given by the videttes next them on their right and left. If the above rule be attended to, the fewer videttes employed to cover the ground the better, as of course it will be desirable to have as few men as possible on duty at the same time.

It may sometimes be necessary to place an intermediate vidette merely for the purpose of carrying on the signal, although he may have no view of the ground to his front, or that the field of view of the videttes on his right and left may embrace the whole extent of ground between them.

In posting videttes we must consider not only whether they can see the videttes on their flanks, but also whether they are posted in an advantageous position to be seen by them ; for instance, a vidette may be placed on the left of a bush, tree, rock, &c., and have a clear view of the videttes on his right, but the same bush, tree, rock, &c., may interrupt or confuse the view of the right vidette. And, on the other hand, although the bush, tree, or other object, as a clump of trees, building, small hill, &c., may not lie between the vidette and man on his right, still it may form a sort of background, which will prevent the right hand vidette from distinguishing him clearly, more particularly if his horse is of a dark colour, or of the same shade as that of the object on his left ; whereas, by moving the left vidette a few yards to the front or rear, he may be brought against the sky or other object so as to enable the men on his right to distinguish him clearly. By attending to this a smaller number of videttes may be made to answer than would otherwise be required ; in short, in posting a vidette it should be considered not only whether he can see those to his right and left, but also whether he can be seen by them.

In posting the videttes, in addition to the usual orders, the order must be given them as to what extent of ground each vidette is to watch.

For instance, if we suppose that the videttes are posted double, the order may be given as follows:—

Posting from the right as before, the left man of the right videttes may be ordered to watch the ground between two distant objects (A and B)—trees, buildings, rocks, clumps of trees, &c. These should embrace about a right angle, which is the space a man can keep easily in view without turning his head.

The right hand man of the next videttes should be ordered to watch the ground between two distant objects (B and C), taking for his right hand object B, the left hand object of the videttes on his right.

Again, the left hand man of the left videttes should be ordered to watch the ground between two objects (C and D), taking for his right hand object the left hand object of the man on his right; and so on throughout the chain.

Also any roads or passes by which the enemy would be likely to advance should be particularly pointed out to the videttes.

It will be also necessary that the ground between the videttes should be reconnoitred, in order to ascertain that there is no hidden ground between them by which a party of the enemy could advance: such as hollow roads, dry courses of rivers or streams, ravines, broken ground, shallow streams or rivers, ground hidden by trees, bushes, rocks, walls, &c. &c.; for it is very possible that the videttes may see clearly from one to the other, so as to distinguish signals, &c., and still such ground may lie between them.

If ground of this description is found to exist it must be watched and videttes placed for the purpose; but they must be so posted that they shall see at least one of the

videttes on the open ground, so that if the signal of the approach of the enemy should be given they may have timely warning, as otherwise they may be cut off.

It may happen that a concealed approach of the above description exists between the videttes; but if the ground at entrance to or in front of such approach can be distinctly seen by the videttes on the high ground, so that no body of the enemy can enter or approach it without being first observed, it will not be necessary to place videttes specially to watch it, but it must be ascertained upon first taking up the ground that no party of the enemy is already concealed there.

It is also generally laid down as a rule that a vidette should not be posted near cover by means of which the enemy's riflemen or Light Infantry might creep up and pick him off.

There is another point to be attended to in posting videttes, namely, that they are to be seen as little from the front as possible; that is, that they are to be as much concealed from the view of an enemy approaching the chain as possible, consistently with their having a clear and uninterrupted view to their own front.

The simplest mode of attaining this is to place the videttes behind bushes, trees, rocks, &c.; or if there are no objects of this nature to take advantage of, and the ground is quite bare, the videttes may be placed behind the ridge or crest of the ground, so as to be able just to look over it; by which means the men's heads and shoulders only will appear to any party approaching from the side of the enemy, and it will therefore be more difficult to distinguish them from a distance.

If it should be found impracticable to place the videttes behind any of the objects above-mentioned, namely, rocks, trees, bushes, &c., without, by so doing, sacrificing the clear and unobstructed view to the front, the next best plan will

be to place them in front of such objects, but at the same time the communication to the rear for the purpose of passing the signal to the post or picquet must be retained; any object or cover of the description above-mentioned, behind or forming a background to a mounted man, confuses the view from the front, and renders it much more difficult to detect the videttes from a distance.

In short, in posting the videttes, one of the principal things to be avoided is placing them in a conspicuous position with the light behind them, for, when so placed, they can be easily seen from a distance by an enemy approaching from the front.

In general, when the state of the weather and atmosphere are favourable, ground tolerably open, the distance between videttes will be found to vary from about 300 to 600 yards, and the videttes, either single or double, to be given by each picquet will be found to average from about three to six.

Summary of general principles in posting videttes:—

1. They are to have a clear view to their front.
2. They are to be seen as little from the front as possible.
3. They are to be seen from the rear by the signal-man of the party furnishing them, or if this is not possible, one or more videttes of the line are to be seen by him.
4. They are to be able to see the signal-man of the party furnishing them, or if this is not possible, one or more of the videttes of the line should be able to see him for the purpose of ascertaining that the signal is taken up by him, continuing themselves to signal until it is.
5. They are to see each other distinctly, right and left, for the purpose of seeing that the signal is taken up, and continuing themselves to signal until it is.

6. The ground is to be occupied by as small a number of videttes as possible.

There is one point which, in posting videttes, is not always sufficiently taken into consideration, namely, that men's powers of vision differ considerably. Amongst a large number of men we must have near-sighted men, as well as far-sighted men, to deal with.

This often produces a failure in passing the signal, which cannot otherwise be accounted for.

The Officer who has posted the videttes may feel confident that the communication has been fully established, and that nothing has been neglected, having already placed himself in the position occupied by every vidette along the chain, and, judging by his own powers of sight, he may feel convinced that it will be almost impossible to avoid seeing the signal, but still, upon the trial being made, it may be found that the signal does not pass. The best way to guard against an error of this description will be to ask each man in succession, as he is being posted, whether he can clearly see the man he is to get the signal from, and also whether he feels quite sure he will be able to distinguish the signal when given.

If there appears to be any doubt upon this point, the distance should be diminished or the man replaced. If it can be avoided, men who are not adapted for the service of videttes, either on account of some defect of sight or hearing, or on account of the unsteadiness of their horses, or other circumstances, should not be placed on this duty.

But, on the contrary, if there is one man in a troop who is either partially blind or deaf, or whose horse either won't stand still, or if he will do that, won't move when he is required, this man seems most unaccountably to be always selected for a vidette in preference to every one else. This is sufficiently provoking when it occurs in the

ordinary drills and exercises, but on service the consequences might be so serious that every precaution should be taken to guard against a mistake of the kind.

In the practice of posting the videttes, as in the practice of patrolling, an easy country should be first selected for the purpose, and afterwards one more difficult.

For the purpose of instruction, it may at first be considered sufficient if the communication from post to post along the line of videttes is completely established, without particularly attending to the communication with the party in the rear.

It is better to teach one thing at a time, and therefore it may be found sufficient as a beginning if the Instructor requires the Officer, or Non-Commissioned Officer, to post a few videttes between any two points indicated, merely attending to the following, namely, that they shall see to their front, that they shall be concealed from the front as much as possible, and that they shall see each other. The latter may be tested by ordering any particular man of the chain to give a certain signal,* and then ascertain if it reaches the opposite flank if given on a flank, or if it reaches both flanks if given from a central point. When this has been acquired, it may further be required that the communication by signal shall be established from the videttes to a party in the rear.

The Instructor should also take an opportunity of explaining to the Non-Commissioned Officers and men the principles laid down in the regulations and elsewhere, for instance, that on outpost duty compliments are not to be paid, swords not drawn, except in case of actual attack, as the gleam from a sword may be seen for miles, &c., &c.

I shall now proceed to the preparatory drill for picquet duty, under the supposition that the details of the patrolling

* See Cavalry Regulations, Section XVI. par. 6, page 223.

duties have been previously fully learnt and understood, both with reference to the small patrols under Non-Commissioned Officers sent to the front or flanks, or along the line of videttes, either within or without, and also to the communicating or connecting flank patrols from picquet to picquet.

Also that the junior Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers have practised and understand how to post the videttes, and that the men are fully acquainted with their duties when on that service.

LESSON V.

PICQUET DUTIES.

FOR the purpose of preparatory drill, a squadron made up to one Officer, two Serjeant-Majors, eight Serjeants, sixteen Corporals, thirty-six file (or more), exclusive of trumpeters and farriers, may be told off as a picquet.

The men to form the picquet fall in upon their own parade-ground, and form in two ranks in the usual way.

The Drill Instructor directs the Officer to number the men off from the right, and to divide the picquet as nearly as possible into three equal parties.

To put the three senior Non-Commissioned Officers in command of the parties; also to divide the remaining Non-Commissioned Officers, giving as nearly as possible an equal number to each party.

The Non-Commissioned Officers in command of parties fall in in front of the centre of their respective parties at a horse's length distance from the front rank, and the remaining Non-Commissioned Officers at a horse's length distance in rear of the parties to which they belong, Serjeants in rear of the right of each party, Corporals in rear of the left, both by seniority from the right, and number off from the right of ranks.

The Officer then tells the whole off by fours and files, and also by parties, the Non-Commissioned Officers in front of the parties numbering off 1, 2, 3 from the right.

The Officer then gives the word, 'Flank Parties Outwards Pass,' 'March,' and, upon their passaging a few yards to their right and left, he gives the word 'Halt.'

He then gives the words 'Rear Rank take Order,' 'March,' 'Spring Arms,' 'Non-Commissioned Officers Commanding Parties, Inspect your Parties.' The Non-Commissioned Officers Commanding Parties make the usual inspection of men, horses, arms, saddlery, &c.; they then make their report to the Officer, and fall in in their places as before.

The Officer may then also be directed to make the inspection himself, the Non-Commissioned Officers Commanding Parties accompanying the Officer as he passes down the ranks of their parties, waiting in the interval on the flank of the front rank of their own party till the Officer passes them in his inspection of the rear rank, when they accompany him in turn down the rear rank of their own party, and fall in in their places as before, whenever the inspection of their own party is complete.

The Officer having made the inspection, then gives the word, 'Rear Rank, Fours About,' and to the whole, 'Load.' The men then go through the motions of loading. The Officer then gives the word, 'Rear Rank, Front,' and to the whole, 'Strap Arms.' The Officer then gives the word, 'Rear Rank take Close Order,' 'March,' and then 'Flank Parties Close to your Centre,' 'Inwards Pass,' 'March,' upon which the two flank parties close to the centre, and are halted by Non-Commissioned Officers commanding parties, who turn their horses right about and passage with their parties; when closed they go right about and remain steady.

He then gives the word, 'Fours, or Sections, Right,' 'Walk,' or 'Trot,' 'March,' and moves off to the usual drill-ground; the Non-Commissioned Officers commanding parties moving up to the left of the leading fours.

When there, the Officer commanding the picquet forms the picquet up, directs the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 3 Party to 'Order out three patrols of a Corporal and two men each.'

The Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 3 Party,

turning towards the party, orders Nos. 1, 2, and 3 Corporals to the front. The three Corporals rein back if necessary, move round the flank, and form opposite the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 3 Party, in the same order as previously, that is, by seniority from the right.

The Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 3 Party orders each of the Corporals to take out one file as a patrol.

No. 3 Corporal gives the word, already laid down for taking out a patrol, to the left file, giving also the word, 'Left Incline' as they move to the front. No. 2 Corporal gives the word as already laid down to the second file from the left. No. 1 Corporal gives the word as laid down to the third file from the left, also giving the word 'Right Incline' as they move to the front.

When the patrols are ready the Corporals report the same to the Officer in command of the picquet, forming in front of him in correct order, and await orders. The Officer in command of the picquet then orders the Corporal of the left patrol to patrol to the left front, the Corporal of the centre patrol to patrol to the front, and the right patrol to the right front of the picquet.

The three patrols move off by word of command from the Corporals, and act as already laid down for patrols. They will only go a short distance to the front, depending upon the size of the drill-ground.

The object should be explained in hearing of the men, namely, to feel for the enemy, and ascertain that all is safe to the front, also to ascertain as much as possible the direction of the roads and nature of the ground in front of the picquet.

These patrols, upon coming in, act as already laid down, forming in their proper places. The Instructor should be particular that the Corporals give the correct words upon going out and coming in.

Upon the departure of these patrols, the Officer should be instructed to direct the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 3 Party to order out two more patrols, consisting of a Serjeant, two Corporals, and four files, or eight men, each.

The Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 3 Party, turning towards his party, orders 'No. 1 and 2 Serjeants to the Front.' The Serjeants move round the flanks, and form opposite the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 3 Party, in their proper order from the right.

The Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 3 Party directs each Serjeant to move out a patrol, as ordered, which will be done as already laid down, except that the Serjeant of the left patrol will give the word 'Left Incline' as they move to the front.

Upon the Serjeants coming to the Officer to receive orders, he directs them to 'Patrol to the right and left of the picquet for a short distance, and maintain their communication by intermediate files,' as already laid down.

The Instructor should then explain that the object of these patrols is to feel for similar patrols sent out from the picquets on the flanks, and thus to establish a communication from picquet to picquet.

And also to ascertain the shortest and best roads between them, as well as to afford a guide to the Officers posting the videttes.

In consequence of working on the drill-ground in a circumscribed space, the patrols should only go a short distance to the flanks, and, for the same reasons, the intermediate files should be posted at only twenty yards or so, but in other respects everything should be done as already laid down, and the Instructor should point out, as usual, that in practice the distances would be greater, and that all that is done upon the drill-ground is merely a preparatory drill.

for what is afterwards to be executed upon a more extended scale.

When three or four men have been posted as intermediate files, at about twenty or thirty yards' distance, according to the size of the drill-ground, the Serjeant should be instructed to halt the patrol, recall the advanced files, front the same way as the picquet, and advance a hundred yards or so to the front.

The intermediate files having been also posted fronting in the same way, the Officer next directs the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 1 Party to order a Serjeant, Corporal, and four (or five) files to the front for the videttes.

This is done as already laid down, the Instructor ascertaining that the words of command are correctly given.

When the videttes are reported ready, the Officer makes over the command of the picquet during the time he is absent, posting the videttes to the next senior, giving him whatever orders he may think necessary. The officer then posts the videttes from right to left, as already laid down, between the points marked by the Serjeants of the flank patrols; upon the flank videttes next them being posted, the Serjeants rejoin their patrols: in practice, the Serjeants of the flank patrols of adjacent picquets rejoin their patrols when the flank videttes of both picquets are posted, and the communication between them established.

The Officer having posted the videttes, returns with the Serjeant to about the centre point of the chain of videttes, the Corporal's party moving as before.

Leaving the Serjeant with one of the centre videttes, the Officer goes himself in the direction of the picquet, the Corporal and remainder of his party accompanying him as he passes them.

Having selected the best position for the post, he places

a signal-man within view of the videttes near which the Serjeant has remained, and also in view of as many other videttes as possible.

If the Officer should find that the videttes near which the Serjeant has stationed himself cannot be distinctly seen from the point he may think most desirable for placing the post, or that any other videttes of the chain can be more clearly discerned from thence, he points the latter videttes out to the Corporal, and then sends him with orders to the Serjeant to move and station himself near them.

The Officer having then selected the best position for the post, places a signal-man within view of the videttes, near which the Serjeant has remained, and also within view of as many other videttes as possible.

The Serjeant acts as in posting videttes, except that he may leave the videttes clear by moving to the flank instead of to the rear.

If the signal-man can be clearly seen from where the videttes he has remained with are posted, he orders one of the videttes to put his horse about, points out the signal-man to him, and then orders him to resume his former position.

If the signal-man should not be clearly seen, the Serjeant acts as laid down in posting videttes, the signal-man being moved a little to one flank or other, in accordance with the signals made by the Serjeant.

If this should not be sufficient, he goes to the Officer and reports accordingly.

But if the signal-man should be clearly seen from the videttes, the Serjeant joins the Officer, and gives the signal-man the usual orders, to which the Officer adds anything he may think necessary.

The Officer then leaving the Serjeant with the signal-man for the post, moves to the picquet, accompanied by the Corporal and any files which may remain.

The Officer then posts one man on the right or left front of the picquet, as a signal-man. Should he be clearly seen by the signal-man for the post already placed, the Serjeant joins the Officer, and reports accordingly. If not, he signals, &c., as in posting videttes.

If necessary, intermediate men must be placed between the videttes and the signal-man for the post, or between him and the signal-man at the picquet.

The whole should be posted from the videttes towards the picquet, the Officer and Serjeant acting as in posting videttes.

In the course of posting the videttes and signal-men, if the Corporal's party should not afford sufficient men, the Corporal should be sent back for an additional file or two.

If any files should remain, the Corporal forms them to the rear of the party to which they belong, and then forms them up as laid down for a patrol. The Corporal also falls in himself in his proper place.

In the open drill-ground the signal-man for the post may be placed in the centre, about half-way between the videttes and the picquet.

In practice the position for the post will depend upon the nature of the country, the roads, &c. The signal-man at the picquet having been posted, the Officer then arranges the reliefs thus:—

If he finds, upon comparing the strength of his parties with the number of videttes out, that he has four men in each party to every vidette, he may relieve his videttes every hour and his party every four hours.

If three, his videttes every hour and his party every three hours.

If two, his videttes every two hours and his party every four hours.

If the Officer finds that he has more than four men to each vidette, or that any of the parties will have a tour

of duty less than the others, he may tell them off for the purpose of increasing his videttes during the night, for the patrol duties, &c.

The above is merely for the purpose of instruction in the preparatory drill. In practice these matters must depend upon the weather and other circumstances.

Having regulated the reliefs, the Officer orders the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 1 Party to post his party to the right or left rear (as the case may be) of the signal-man for the post already placed, so as to leave the view clear between the two signal-men.

If necessary he may send the Serjeant who accompanied him in posting the videttes, to point out exactly the position he may have selected as most suitable for the post, having previously instructed the Serjeant on this subject.

The Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 1 Party gives the word, ‘No. 1 Party advance by half sections from the right; walk (or trot), march;’ and when arrived at the position indicated by the Officer, ‘Front, form.’ The Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 1 Party then takes a file of men to accompany him and visits the videttes, pointing out to them in turn, and ascertaining that they are acquainted with the roads by which they are to fall back upon the post.

The file of men accompanying the Non-Commissioned Officer should keep rather to the rear, and act upon the same principles as the Corporal’s party in posting the videttes.

If the Serjeant who was employed in posting the videttes has accompanied the Non-Commissioned Officer Commanding No. 1 Party, he will give every information on these points in his power, or which may be required.

This, of course, in the open drill-ground, will be a mere form, as the ground being open the videttes can always fall back directly upon the post.

The Officer then directs the Non-Commissioned Officer Commanding No. 3 Party to send out two Corporals to the right and left of the picquet to recall the intermediate files and flank patrols.

The Serjeants of the flank patrols retire at a trot, if possible picking up the intermediate files upon the road; and upon their return forming up as already laid down for patrols.

In the meantime the Officer directs the Non-Commissioned Officer Commanding No. 3 Party to order out two patrols of a Corporal and one file each.

The Non-Commissioned Officer Commanding No. 3 Party gives the usual orders as laid down. The two Corporals having reported their patrols ready, remain waiting for orders.

Upon the first flank patrols coming in, the Officer orders the patrols in waiting to 'patrol to the picquets on the flanks,' to report that 'the videttes are posted, and that all is quiet to the front.' He also orders a Corporal from the first flank patrols to accompany each patrol and point out the road.

On the open drill ground these patrols will only go a short distance to the right and left, and then return, but the object and intention should be pointed out as usual.

Upon the return of the flank patrols last sent out, and their reporting all right, the Officer orders the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding No. 3 Party to dismount his party, which he accordingly does as laid down in the regulations.

The Instructor should then send an order to the right or left, or any intermediate vidette, to give any particular signal, as laid down in the regulations.

He should then observe that the signal is correctly given; each vidette continuing the signal till taken up by the next videttes or signal-men within sight.

Also that the signal is correctly repeated from the videttes to the post, and from the post to the picquet, correcting any faults which he may observe.

Upon the signal being made, the Officer should be instructed to move forward to the line of videttes, leaving the next senior in command, with directions to order the Non-Commissioned Officer Commanding the dismounted men to mount his men; also to order out a Serjeant and file of men.

The Serjeant and file of men follow the Officer, halt about forty or fifty yards in rear of the chain of the videttes, and await orders from the Officer.

The Officer having made his observation returns to the picquet, accompanied by the Serjeant and file of men; the latter being formed up, and the Serjeant falling in in his place as usual.

It should be fully understood that nothing more is aimed at or intended in these lessons than to convey a certain amount of instruction to the men and Non-Commissioned Officers. These lessons are nothing more than what they profess to be, namely, a preparatory drill, for the purpose of establishing a system which it must be left to individual intelligence to modify and adapt to circumstances; for instance, it is by no means meant to be implied that on service the numbers or opportunities will generally be afforded, or that the means will be at hand, for carrying out all the details of picquet duties here laid down. But, at the same time, it is hoped that, through the means of the instruction here detailed, the object to be attained will be fully comprehended, and a systematic, general, and concerted means of attaining it, so far understood by every individual concerned in the execution of the duties, that where difficulties occur, numbers become reduced, or the usual and practised arrangements are not

attainable, the Non-Commissioned Officers and men, either individually or in concert, may be able to hit upon expedients and supply deficiencies, at the same time deviating no more than is absolutely necessary from the usual arrangement, and, as far as circumstances will permit, preserving an adherence to the established system.

By this means, Non-Commissioned Officers and men will be able to act in concert, to apprehend at once what is wanted, to understand short and concise orders from their superiors, to know what each other are about, to render assistance and avoid confusion, and, in short, to act upon a general system.

In order to do this, it is not only necessary (in my opinion) that those in command should understand the object aimed at, and the system of outpost duties in a general way, but that every Non-Commissioned Officer and private soldier who may be called on to act on this service, and not only to act, but often to act upon his own personal responsibility, and from the dictates of his own individual intelligence, should (at least up to a certain point) fully appreciate and comprehend the system upon which it is intended the outpost duties should be worked.

Most of the works upon outposts that I have seen, seem to be written for those in command of outposts. Whether picquets, advanced guards, or supports, we are told that the men should be instructed to do this, and should be warned against doing that. And this would be very easy if we had only half a dozen men to deal with; but when we have several hundred, a more detailed method of instruction in the first rudiments seems necessary. We must teach men their alphabet before we can expect them to read.

It is laid down that the picquet should be told off into three parties; but on service it is possible that the strength of the picquet may be so reduced, that telling it off into

three parties would become an absurdity. In such a case, it might be told off into two parties instead of three.

There may even be cases when the number of men composing the picquet shall be so small that it may not be desirable to separate it into parties at all.

But for the sake of instruction and preparatory drill, when once the patrol and vidette duties have been learned, it becomes desirable to bring as large a number of men and Non-Commissioned Officers as possible under the Instructor at the same time.

By this means the course of instruction to a large number of men will be considerably shortened ; and for this reason, in the first lesson of picquet duties, the strength of the picquets is supposed to be made up to the number laid down.

In the first lessons of vidette and patrol duties individual instruction and superintendence was more absolutely necessary, and consequently only small parties could be brought under instruction at one and the same time.

If a Non-Commissioned Officer has been taught to tell off a picquet of a certain strength into three parties, to allot the different duties, order and arrange the reliefs, and other matters, it will not require any very extraordinary exercise of intelligence on his part to adapt the rules thus learnt to different circumstances, and to act upon the same general principles, although he may have smaller numbers to deal with.

This adaptation of a general principle to circumstances, or modification of a system once learned, does not require any very great exercise of intellect, and nine men out of ten will be found competent to it, particularly when the subject-matter to be dealt with is so simple.

But this is a very different thing from leaving every man to invent a system at the moment it is wanted for action.

To devise expedients to meet difficulties in the execution of any given system, or to hit upon *impromptu* contrivances, supply deficiencies, or fill in details, is a very different thing from forming a system of details at the moment it is required, and that in all the confusion and excitement of outpost service, and above all, when such a system is formed, getting others to understand, appreciate, and work upon it.

Even upon the supposition that this is easy and practicable, and that everyone can make a little system for himself and those under him whenever he wants it, still, in a service like that of outposts, when the force employed is necessarily broken up into detached parties, separated by comparatively long intervals, and consequently the command divided, the system, if thus formed *impromptu*, will most likely be as various as the parties are numerous, and, consequently, there will be neither organization, mutual dependence, nor unity of action.

That some system in these matters will be absolutely necessary can hardly be denied, even were it only for the arrangement of the reliefs, and allotment of the different duties.

If the weather is bad, the enemy near, or if, for any special reasons, strict guard and increased watchfulness are rendered necessary; and if, in addition, the strength of the picquets is reduced, the duties of videttes and patrols become peculiarly severe, and any man who is called upon at such times to fulfil these duties, however prompt, ready and willing he may be to answer the call when it comes to his turn, will not unreasonably feel discontented if he finds that, from the negligence, ignorance, or want of systematic arrangement of his superiors, he has to take more than his own share of the work, and that his intervals of rest are unjustly and unnecessarily shortened.

The whole system of outpost service, from first to last,

must consist in this, that while a certain portion keep watch the remainder rest.

Were it not for the introduction of such a system, the whole army would be kept constantly on the alert, or else remain constantly subject to surprise.

It is in accordance with such a system that an advanced guard is sent a certain distance in advance of the main body.

It is in accordance with the same principle that the advanced guard sends forward a certain number of detachments, and that these detachments again send out picquets, and the picquets furnish videttes.

The same general system holds throughout, only, as we approach the outer chain, the tours of duty become more frequent, the service more severe, and the intervals of rest more restricted.

Such is an outline of the system of outpost service. There may be modifications or different arrangements of detail in different services; bodies of troops under different names may be introduced between the detachments and the picquets, or between the picquets and videttes; or the main body of the advanced guard may be dispensed with; or the communications may be maintained in different ways in different services. But the main features of the system must remain the same until some radical change in the mode of carrying on war shall occur, forcing us to change the whole system and start from a fresh basis.

But until such a necessity occurs, the old system will most likely remain in operation, and so long as it does, systematic arrangement will be imperatively required from first to last, in small matters as well as great.

Rules seem to be multiplied, and detailed instructions given in works upon outposts, as well as in the regulations of different services, with reference to the arrangements of

advanced guards, supports, detachments, postes d'appuis, gardes, picquets, according to the different names they may be called by, but the duties of videttes and patrols are mostly treated in a general way. In some few cases more detailed instruction in these matters is given, but no system which carries on the instruction from step to step in the minor duties of Non-Commissioned Officers and privates of Cavalry has yet appeared, or if it has, I have not seen it, and it is with a view of supplying this deficiency that I have attempted the present system of drill.

It will be observed that the picquet, having been told off in three parties, and then marched to the exercise ground, the duties, such as patrolling to the front flanks, &c., are first furnished by No. 3 Party, subsequently the vidette and post duties are given by No. 1 Party. This is merely in accordance with the principle that those who have just furnished a duty shall be the last called on for the relief. The duties are supposed to be furnished by the parties from right to left; and, consequently, if No. 1 Party is the first, No. 3 Party will be the last for duty. The principle having been once inculcated by the means here specified, and the object explained by the Instructor, it can be carried out as far as circumstances may permit. When the picquets are too small to afford three, or even two parties, the Non-Commissioned Officers will have the general principle clearly in view; they will feel convinced of the great importance of acting upon it, and, seeing distinctly the object aimed at, will most likely hit upon some expedient to attain it.

The picquet is supposed to occupy the ground for the first time, and the country in advance is supposed to be unexplored; therefore, the first step is to send out patrols to the front to feel for the enemy and search the country. If this step is taken in the first instance by each picquet along a chain, there will be at once a sort of network of

patrols out to a certain distance in front of the whole line.

If there should be any points of ground from which a good view could be obtained, temporary videttes might be placed there at once to watch, and withdrawn when the regular videttes are posted. These videttes should be merely sent up to the points mentioned, and placed there as look-out men within view of the picquet, but without reference to communicating with each other by signal or otherwise; they should be taken from No. 3 Party.

In the drill, the number and strength of the patrols is laid down, but this will, of course, depend upon circumstances on service; and in order practically to illustrate that such is the case, the Instructor may vary the number or strength, or both, in the course of the drill.

In the preparatory drill it is laid down that the patrols shall only go a short distance to the front, depending upon the size of the drill-ground; but when practising these picquet duties in the open country the Instructor can give detailed instructions to the Non-Commissioned Officers Commanding the patrols, as to the roads they are to follow, or upon any other matters which may suggest themselves at the time.

It being now supposed that the ground in front of the line of picquets has been covered by a sort of atmosphere of patrols, the next step is to connect the picquets along the chain with each other.

If we should suppose the picquets posted in an open plain about a mile apart, and without any intervening objects, and possibly within sight of each other, it would be a very easy matter to comply with the instructions usually given under this head in works upon outposts, namely, that the Officer or Non-Commissioned Officer in command of a picquet should send patrols to his flanks to communicate with the picquets on his right and left; but

if, on the other hand, we should suppose a post assigned to a picquet in a close, or even tolerably open country, where the Officer or Non-Commissioned Officer in command of the picquet may find woods, coppices, hills, villages, enclosures, lakes, or streams on his front or flanks, and the views to any considerable extent along the direction of the line of picquets shut in on both flanks, the matter becomes a little more difficult and complicated. The Officer or Non-Commissioned Officer in command may know the general direction of the posts occupied, or about to be occupied, by the flank picquets, and having indicated the same to the Corporals of the flank patrols, he may start them on their mission ; but the chances are small that men new to this sort of work, and unpractised at finding their way through a country, and maintaining a given line of direction, without allowing themselves to be baffled or thrown out by obstacles, will reach their destination within any reasonable time.

A group of men, like a picquet behind a wood or village (a likely post for them to occupy), at perhaps more than a mile distance, in a tolerably close country, is a small mark very likely to be missed, and the Corporal and his patrol, instead of finding the picquet they are in search of, may not very improbably end in losing themselves, and only regaining their own picquet after a considerable circuit.

Those who have been in the habit of making rough sketches of ground without instruments will know that it requires some little practice to move through even a moderately difficult country, on any given line of direction, or to regain it when thrown out by obstacles; even a slight deviation from the true line at any given point throws a man more out of his course than those who have not considered or practised the thing would generally suppose. If he once forsakes the correct line of direction,

every step widens the distance, and brings him farther from the road he should have followed.

I freely admit that a very little practice at this sort of thing will be found sufficient for most men, but it is to afford men and Non-Commissioned Officers, who are to be the actors in this case, this very little practice, and also to ascertain the amount of practice necessary for each man individually, and to administer it accordingly, that I think the present drill is desirable.

When the Non-Commissioned Officers have had a little practice in this sort of patrolling, the Instructor selecting the country judiciously, beginning with an easy country and ending with a difficult one, they will find that finding their way in a given direction, even for a mile, in a close country, is not so very simple a business as they may at first suppose.

A little practice will lead every man to make certain rules for his own guidance, and although, amongst any given number of men, these rules may be all different, they will all tend to the same result.

The Non-Commissioned Officers will learn the value of points in the distance as a guide in the direction they are to follow, and as a means of regaining it if lost. Habit will teach them how and at what distance to select these points. They will often find to their cost that trees and rocks which stand out against the light, and look very remarkable from one point of view, melt into a background of wood or adjacent rocks and hills when seen from another; and when, after a quarter of a mile's ride, they look round to see if the point they thought they were so sure of is still as plain as it was, they find it, if not vanished into thin air, so jumbled and mixed up with solid woods and rocks, that they can no longer detect it. A little of this sort of practice will make men recollect that the sun and moon and other heavenly bodies rise in the

east and set in the west ; that if a man starts in a given direction and finds the wind blowing in his face at starting, and if, by any chance, he should find it blowing in his back, either the wind has changed, or he must be going in the wrong direction.

I don't mean by any means to assert that the generality of men do not know these things, but I doubt their thinking of making a practical application of them in judging the direction they are following, or regaining it if lost.

It is laid down in the regulations that every Officer employed on outpost duty should be provided with a map, a telescope, and pocket compass ; but I think it would be very desirable that some of the senior Non-Commissioned Officers should be provided with pocket compasses, as they would be found useful in patrolling—for instance, the Officer Commanding a picquet having been informed of the name, description or direction of the locality to be occupied by his picquet, might also be informed of the localities of the picquets on his flanks, he might take the bearings of the latter from his map, and direct the Serjeants of the flank patrols accordingly.

It is intended that the flank patrols should not only find a road of communication from point to point, and thus connect the picquets along the line, but also find out the best and shortest road between them.

If the patrols work in the way described for connecting flank patrols, there can be little difficulty in this, considering that each patrol has only about half-a-mile of country to traverse ; and, as has been already stated, this is done at once throughout the whole line upon the picquets first coming on the ground, and therefore the communication is rapidly established.

The Serjeants Commanding the first flank patrols may have opportunities of gaining useful information as to the roads, country, &c., which may be communicated to the

Officer on his arrival at the central point between the picquets to commence posting his videttes as already described, and which point will be marked by the Serjeants of both patrols.

Although two individuals starting from points about a mile apart may find some difficulty in meeting in a very close or difficult country, two patrols with their flank files out, which they may increase if circumstances require it, or their strength permits, should not find any if they do their work properly.

Upon the Serjeants meeting and communicating with each other, there can be little difficulty, upon comparing notes, as to the distance passed over by each in placing themselves at the central point (or nearly so) between the two picquets.

The advantage to be derived from marking this point in the subsequent posting of the videttes has been already described.

I have also already alluded to the guide afforded by the line of the intermediate files, as to the distances between the videttes and the picquet, as well as the general direction of the line of posts the videttes are to occupy.

It has been laid down in the preparatory drill that, in posting the videttes, the Officers should move along the line from right to left or from left to right, as the case may be, and that the Corporal's party should follow along a line more retired or concealed from the front, or side next the enemy, and in an average sort of country this will generally be practicable; but in a close and intersected country, obstacles, such as small lakes, streams, ravines, close underwood, villages, enclosures, may occur between two adjacent posts of the videttes, and although the view between may not be intercepted, it may not be possible to move in a direct line from post to post. In this case the Officer and Corporal's party must return upon the line of

intermediate files, which line has been already ascertained to be passable, and they must move along this line, thus avoiding the obstacle, till they come about opposite to where the next post for videttes should be selected, when they again make their way to the front, the Officer preceding till he gets sight of the videttes last posted. The intermediate files, having been already on the ground, or the Non-Commissioned Officers of the flank patrols, may be able to assist the Officer with some information; but in a case like this, the guide afforded by the line of intermediate files will be found doubly useful. When the placing of the new videttes has been effected, as already described, the Serjeant who has remained with the old videttes must of course join by the same road as that which was previously taken by the Officer.

Something may be done in the way of reconnoitring and gaining information by the flank patrols; and in a very difficult and close country, in addition to the patrols already mentioned, a patrol of a Corporal and a file of men might be sent in any particular direction to ascertain any particular point as to communications, directions of roads, streams, river, &c., in the immediate vicinity of the picquet, or even in extreme cases two patrols might be sent to explore the country a short distance in front of the picquet, in rear of the intended line of videttes.

It is generally laid down that the Officer in command of a picquet should make himself thoroughly acquainted with the ground in the vicinity of his post, so as to acquire the great advantage which a perfect knowledge of the ground must give in case of an attack by the enemy upon his post. If he only relieves a picquet which has already occupied the ground, he will have leisure to explore it himself, and with the assistance of the Officer of the old picquet can easily make himself master of the necessary information while the routine duties of the relief are being

proceeded with. But in the present stage of the preparatory drill, it is supposed that the picquet takes up new ground which has not been before occupied—and it should be borne in mind that one man cannot do everything himself at the same time. The Officer has other and important duties to attend to upon coming on the ground, such as sending out his patrols, posting his videttes, and other matters; but at the same time it is highly desirable that the ground in the immediate vicinity of the picquet should be reconnoitred at once and without delay, and information gained which may serve as a guide to the Officer in selecting a favourable position for the small post in front of the picquet, if he should consider it desirable to place one, or in any case may assist him in establishing the communication by signal between the picquet and his videttes. In a very difficult country it is evident that this information would be most useful, if not absolutely necessary, even in posting the videttes. And how is this information to be obtained at once upon coming on the ground without taking the Officer away from urgent and important duties which imperatively demand his immediate and undivided attention?

Simply by a division of labour in the way already described, by which many departments of the same work, tending to the same end, may proceed effectively at the same time—that golden secret of the present day, which we may as well try the efficacy of in the outpost work, since it seems to have succeeded so well in everything else.

I have already remarked more than once that the mere fact of a Commander of an outpost being acquainted with his duties theoretically, or even practically, will not suffice, unless he can get his subordinates to act under him, and can with confidence entrust the execution of a certain portion of the work to others: and therefore the necessity of a previous training of Non-Commissioned Officers and

men, and a certain degree of practice of these duties before entering upon them on service by those who are to be commanded. This would produce a mutual understanding, by means of which orders would be quickly and thoroughly appreciated, and descriptions of ground or otherwise easily and clearly understood: for instance, if an Officer should find himself in command of a picquet occupying a close and difficult country for the first time—if he and his Non-Commissioned Officers and men have practised these duties before, and that general understanding which such previous practice must produce, exists between them—the Officer, if he thinks it necessary, can order any Serjeant or Corporal of his picquet to take a file of men with him, and while he (the Officer) may be engaged in some other duty, explore a short distance in some given direction, find out whether there is a road or bridge over a stream, an obstacle in the way, or in general reconnoitre the ground, with a view to ascertain the best position for a post in front of the picquet, and the best means of carrying on the signal, or, in short, to obtain any information he may require; and this order he may give with a certain degree of certainty that his meaning will be at once understood, and his intentions carried into effect, simply because he and the Serjeant or Corporal, as well as the file of men, have worked together before in looking out for places for posts between picquets and videttes, or in posting men to carry signals from videttes to picquets; and therefore they will not only comprehend the order at once, but understand what the Officer is likely to want in the way of information, without further explanation; and the Officer may proceed upon whatever duty demands his more immediate attention with a full confidence that some useful intelligence will be ready for him at the proper place when he wants it. But if, on the contrary, the receiver of such an order has never had any practice in looking out a

position for a post, or never assisted in establishing a communication by signal, he will most likely not know what is meant or wanted, and there will then be no leisure to teach him. Also, when the patrol does return with the desired information for the Officer, if he and his men have been in the habit of working together, a short explanation as to the ground, &c., will be quickly and clearly understood. Those who have been in the habit of sketching ground will know what a clear and unmistakable description of ground or country can be given and received by those who have worked together in this department. A very few conventional terms clearly understood by the explainer and the explained to in such cases are most useful, and will prevent many a mistake and misconception.

In my opinion, it is quite a mistake to suppose that the majority of our Non-Commissioned Officers in the present day are not capable of understanding ground sufficiently well for many practical purposes.

We do not want our Non-Commissioned Officers to sketch; but there is no absolute magic required to enable most men to read ground sufficiently well to give an intelligible account of it; and a very little instruction and practice will enable nine men out of ten to give an understandable description of a small piece of country which they may have been employed to explore, or of the ground at each side and in the vicinity of the road they may have been employed to patrol.

I do not think that we now avail ourselves of or depend upon the capacities and individual intelligence, as well as education, of our Non-Commissioned Officers and men as much as we might do. The times when the soldier was to be considered as a machine attached to a carbine or a sword have long since passed, and I think we have been in the habit of trying to make the Cavalry Soldier and his horse one in more senses than the right one.

Every day of the present time shows us what our men are capable of, and we should take advantage of the education and intelligence of the soldier of the present day, as well as of the old and well-known qualities of courage and endurance.

We shall now suppose that the front and flank patrols have been sent out, and that the Officer has posted his line of videttes from right to left, or from left to right, or from centre to flanks, as the case may be, assisted in the same, if necessary, by the information received from the Non-Commissioned Officers of the flank patrols, and guided by the line of intermediate files; and that in the meantime the ground between the videttes and the picquet has become tolerably well known, having been (if very close or difficult) reconnoitred by one or more small patrols.

All this may take a long time in the description, but when everyone knows his work, and the different departments are carried on at the same time, the whole comes off quickly—at least as quickly as it is possible to perform such duties effectively.

The Officer having posted his videttes as laid down, and having a tolerably good knowledge of the ground in rear of the videttes, acquired either by his own observation or from the report of others, he may make a sufficiently good estimate as to the direction of a suitable position for the post if he is going to place one, or if not, the direction in which the signal-men to carry the communications from the videttes to the picquets should be posted; he leaves the Serjeant with those videttes which he thinks will most likely be clearly distinguished from the position he expects to select for the signal-man, and moves himself, accompanied by the Corporal's party, in that direction. If he finds upon reaching the ground that he has mis-calculated either that the position which may have first

struck him as suitable for the signal-man, when seen from the line of videttes, upon a closer approach or nearer view is not so, or if it is so, that the videttes with whom he may have left the Serjeant are not so clearly seen as he imagined they would be, or that some other videttes of the chain are more easily distinguished, he points these last out to the Corporal and sends him back to the Serjeant with orders to move from the videttes near which he has been left posted, and place himself near the videttes indicated by the Officer to the Corporal.

All this sort of thing is laid down to prevent unnecessary riding about, returning upon one's steps, trying to do too many things at the same time, and everybody's business as well as one's own, which disturbs and confuses everybody, and nothing is done right; besides which, horses are not steam-engines, and if we overwork them, galloping here and there upon errands upon which others might be sent, when we want them for real work they may fail us.

The Corporal has been quietly trotting along with his party, with intermediate halts, while the Officer has most likely been galloping from post to post of his videttes; besides which, it is much more important that the Officer's horse should be spared (unless he has a spare one) and ready for any work which may be wanted than the Corporal's.

The Serjeant having been posted near some videttes of the chain which can be clearly distinguished by the Officer, the Officer places the signal-man so as to get a good view of them, and so as that, to the best of his opinion, he can be seen by the Serjeant or by the videttes if they should look in that direction.

The posting of the signal-man from videttes to post, and from post to picquet, is upon the same principle as that adopted in posting the videttes. The Serjeant, before

leaving the videttes near which he has stationed himself, makes one of them turn about, points out to him the signal-man, and leaves orders with him in case of a signal being passed to continue it, not only till it is taken up by the next videttes on his flank, but also until it is taken up by the signal-man in the rear.

Upon placing the signal-man, the Officer will move to the flank or rear, as the case may be, so as to leave him clear and allow the Serjeant to judge whether he can be distinguished by the videttes.

The signal-men, from videttes to picquet, will then be posted according to the principles already laid down for posting videttes.

It must be evident that, comparatively speaking, it can be of little use passing the signal along the line of videttes unless it is also conveyed to the picquets in the rear.

And, therefore, the communication must be secured under all circumstances, and however great the number of men required for the purpose; but there are few cases in which a couple of signal-men will not be sufficient—one for the post and one for the picquet, or, perhaps, in a close country, one intermediate man may be necessary.

At the first view of the ground it may seem that many men will be wanted to carry back the signal, but, even in a close country, with a little patience and dodging about, one man may generally be made to see another at about a quarter of a mile's distance or more, and distinguish his signals.

By taking a little trouble a view may be obtained, even in the closest country, through a gap in a hedge, a break in a wall round the corner of a wood or village, and by this means the men will be spared and fewer placed on this duty.*

* A branch of a tree might be cut off, a hole cut in a hedge, or a part of a wall knocked down, if necessary to open the view.

In some works upon Outposts, in treating this part of the subject, it is generally laid down that an Officer in command of a picquet, upon arriving at the ground he is to occupy, will immediately place a small post at a short distance in front of his picquet, and then post two or more videttes a little further in advance, and within view of the post.

This seems all very simple on paper; or if it is illustrated with pieces of wood or card on a table the whole thing will seem very easy; and so it would be, if it was always worked on the drill-ground or an open plain, where the view and passage was unobstructed on all sides, and where the post and videttes were placed in full view of the picquet.

But in a close and difficult country all this becomes a very different thing, and for a close and difficult country, and for unfavourable states of the weather, the time, the light, &c. &c., we must be prepared.

Working in a moderately open and easy country, under favourable circumstances, will be plain sailing to those who have practised in a difficult one when the time and weather was unpropitious.

I have heard this system of placing the signal-man first, and then moving the men who are told off for the post up to him, objected to, on the ground that it is at variance with the generally received maxim that the supports are to be thrown out from the main body in the first instance, and afterwards the smaller bodies to which they are to form a support; and also that it is not in accordance with the rule already alluded to, that the Officer in Command of the picquet shall first place his post in position and then throw out his videttes to the front, radiating from a sort of common centre at the post. I have already stated that however simple this may appear in theory, and however practical it may be in a very open country, it will, in my

opinion, become difficult, if not impracticable, in a close one ; besides which it should be recollected that in the first place the patrols are out to the front, and, therefore, a surprise or sudden attack, to a certain extent, guarded against. 2nd. The intermediate files left by the first flank patrols form a sort of chain of temporary videttes while the permanent videttes are being posted generally upon a more extended line, and are in a position to watch against a surprise. 3rd. The whole of the picquet remains mounted during the posting of the videttes, and I think it is questionable whether, even in the case of a sudden and unexpected attack, it is not better to have as strong a force as possible concentrated at one central point, and ready to move in any direction, than to separate it merely to gain the advantage of having a small party of men a hundred yards or so nearer to the videttes.

When the whole is posted it is a different thing ; then the small post takes its position in the vicinity of the videttes, more for the purpose of keeping them in view, affording the reliefs, forming the immediate point of retreat, extending as skirmishers if required, and fulfilling the general principle of outpost duties that the few shall watch over the many, than merely for the purpose of a support in the general acceptation of the term.

4th. Moving the post out before its position is finally determined upon, which position must be mainly dependent upon the posts occupied by the videttes, and, therefore, cannot be determined previous to the posting, might produce confusion and delay, particularly in a close country, if it was moved about from place to place ; besides, it should be recollected that the posting of videttes is only in progress during the time the position of the post is left unoccupied, and that almost immediately upon the posting of the videttes being completed it is moved up to its place. The above are the reasons which have induced

me to give the preference to the system of posting the signal-man in the first instance.

I have several times spoken of working in a close country, and it may be said that Cavalry are never required to take the outpost duty in a close country; but Cavalry may be ordered to take up and occupy with outposts a line of country in which portions of close or difficult country may occur (see orders by Sir G. Murray during the Peninsular war); besides which, there are many descriptions of country quite flat and open enough to render the occupation of the outpost by Cavalry not only practicable, but desirable; but, from being closely cultivated, intersected by hedges, walls, woods, trees, villages, lakes, streams, canals, or from any other cause, the view may be constantly intercepted, or the passage in all directions obstructed, so as to produce difficulties in arranging the outposts—and it is in order to meet such difficulties, if they do occur, that I have endeavoured to form the present system. Sometimes the country may be generally open, but at the same time a belt of close or difficult country may intervene between the picquet and videttes.

I have only spoken of placing one post between the picquet and videttes; but there may be cases in which it will be desirable to place two, or even in extreme cases three, either with reference to the difficulty of relieving all the videttes from one point, or the non-convergence of the lines of retreat from the different posts selected for the videttes upon one particular point, or with reference to the greater facility and certainty of carrying the signal to the rear, when the number of lines of signal-men by which it is conveyed are multiplied. When it is considered desirable to place two or three small posts instead of one, it will be only necessary to divide one of the parties into which the picquet was originally told off, into two or three portions, as posts proportionate to the number of videttes

to be relieved by each, and send them up by the proper roads to their respective signal-men, who mark the position each is to occupy; or if it should be found expedient to relieve some of the videttes from the picquet, the number of men required for the relief might be retained with the picquet and the remainder of the party sent out to form the post or posts.

It will be evident that the number of posts requisite, and the positions they are to occupy, cannot be so well determined previous as subsequent to the posting of the videttes and exploring the country; and in the meantime two or three parties wandering about in different directions would be likely to produce confusion, and what has been just stated would form an additional reason for adopting the present system of placing the signal-man or men first, and then moving up the post to the position or positions thus marked.

Sometimes a dismounted man may be placed on a height close to the picquet, or in some position which a mounted man could not occupy, and where he may have a sufficiently extended view to enable him to give notice of the signal being passed, and by this means the number of signal-men which might otherwise be required may be reduced. The nature of the country will suggest anything of this kind, but it should be borne in mind that the communication to the rear by signal from the videttes to the picquet, as well as along the chain, should be secured by some sure means.

The positions for the post or posts having been determined, the commanders should be informed of the roads by which their posts are to retire upon the picquet, and also the videttes which they are respectively to relieve pointed out to them, as well as the roads or lines by which the videttes are to fall back upon the posts.

The commanders of the posts should visit their own

videttes, and point out to each respectively the road or line by which they should retire upon the post.

It is generally laid down that in case of surprise the videttes or posts are not to retire immediately upon the picquet ; but it is desirable that they should be acquainted with the shortest and best roads by which to retire upon their supports when there is time to do so.

The signal-man should be placed so as to have as many videttes as possible in view, as the greater number he may have in view the less likelihood will there be of a signal escaping him ; but it should under all circumstances be ensured beyond all doubt that he has one vidette of the chain clearly in view.

The position of the post must not be selected solely with reference to the signal-man obtaining a clear view of as many videttes as possible ; reference must also be had to the convergence of the lines of retreat of the videttes to be relieved or supported, to the concealment of the post from the front, and, in warm climates particularly, to obtaining shelter for the men by means of trees, buildings, rocks, &c.

As to concealing the post from the view of the enemy, it may not always be practicable to place it behind objects to effect the purpose of concealment, and in this case, placing the men along a hedge, outside a wood, behind a ridge, amongst rocks, may have much effect in confusing the view, and may tend to their escaping notice, when more effectual means of attaining the same result are not attainable without involving too great a sacrifice of other important points.

But one thing may be avoided, I should say, under all circumstances, and that is placing them in a conspicuous position on the top of a ridge with the light behind them.

The Officer having returned to the picquet, the videttes

and post having been placed, immediately recalls the first flank patrols and intermediate files, and look-out men if any have been posted, who come in as quickly as possible, and form up in their places as laid down for patrols. Upon these first flank patrols being reported to the Officer as returned, he orders out two patrols of a Corporal and file of men each, which are supposed to patrol (each accompanied by a Corporal of the patrols just returned, in order to point out the road) to the picquets on each flank, for the purpose of reporting that their own picquet is posted, and to make any further report ordered by their Officers. These patrols are taken from No. 3 Party for the reason already stated, No. 1 Party giving the videttes and posts.

The flank patrols having returned, and it being also supposed that the patrols from the neighbouring picquets have arrived, and reported that all is quiet to the front, and their respective picquets posted, No. 3 Party dismounts.

So far No. 3 Party has furnished the duties for the front and flank patrols, &c., No. 1 Party giving the videttes. Therefore, upon the supposition that the reliefs are furnished from right to left, No. 3 will evidently be the last, and No. 2 the next for the relief, consequently No. 3 dismounts and remains dismounted half the time between reliefs of parties, when No. 3 mounts and No. 2 dismounts, and remains dismounted the remainder of the time, which being expired, No. 2 mounts and furnishes the relief.

No. 1, upon coming in, dismounts, and remains dismounted half the time between the reliefs, when No. 3, which is now the next for the reliefs, dismounts, and so on throughout.

By this means each party will be dismounted immediately previous to furnishing the relief and immediately subsequent to their return from duty. Those who have sat for a considerable time in the saddle in very cold or hot weather

will know how grateful and necessary a rest of this kind becomes.

The present drill is merely meant to illustrate the system in this particular. It may not be necessary or expedient, or perhaps possible, to carry it out fully on service, or it may be considered right to dismount the whole picquet.

But in some cases an arrangement of this kind, or something similar to it, as well as an arrangement in the matter of reliefs, will be found not only convenient, but absolutely necessary, and, as I have already stated, it seems to me that the quickest and easiest way to convey anything of this kind to a number of men and Non-Commissioned Officers is by means of a practicable and palpable illustration ; it fixes a system in their memory, and then they may afterwards modify or alter it as circumstances or their own intelligence may suggest.

The Officer, in moving up to the videttes upon a signal being given, in visiting the videttes, or under any other circumstances which involve his riding along the front, should leave his attending party a short distance in the rear to follow his movements, keeping out of view from the front as much as possible, as was done in posting the videttes. If a signal has been given, the Officer upon reaching the line of videttes will enquire from what direction the signal came ; he will then ride in that direction, to ascertain the cause of the signal. If he cannot ascertain the cause, but finds it has been taken up from the videttes of one of the picquets on the flank, he leaves a Non-Commissioned Officer with the flank videttes, returns to the picquet, and sends a patrol to the flank picquet to enquire the cause of the signal, and also a patrol to the front if necessary, or he may send the Non-Commissioned Officer and party which accompanied him to act as a reconnoitring patrol.

RELIEVING THE VIDETTES FROM THE POST.

THE Non-Commissioned Officer commanding the post directs a Corporal to order out the number of files required for the relief.

The Corporal gives the word, — ‘Files on the right, Advance, March,’ upon which they move to the front. The Corporal then gives the word ‘Halt, Rear rank take order, March, Spring arms.’ Having inspected the men, he gives the word ‘Rear rank take close order, March.’ He then reports to the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding the post, that the videttes are ready, and upon receiving his orders he returns to the videttes, and gives the word ‘Advance by half sections from the right, March,’ and moves in the direction of the first videttes to be relieved. Having arrived at about forty or fifty yards in rear of the videttes to be first relieved, he gives the word ‘Halt, one file to the front, March,’ when the men ordered move up on the flanks of the videttes posted, the Corporal moving up with them. The Corporal then gives the word ‘Give up your orders.’ While giving up the orders, both the old videttes and the relief remain looking to the front.

Upon the orders being given up, the Corporal gives the word ‘Relief take post, March,’ upon which the old videttes rein back, and form in rear of the Corporal’s party, the relief passing into their places. All the other videttes are relieved in the same way, the Corporal moving with the relieving party about forty or fifty yards in rear of the chain of videttes, so as to attract as little attention

from the front as possible. The same method will, of course, be followed in relieving the videttes from the picquet.

While the orders are being given up, the Corporal may remain in rear of either flank where he can best hear.

Upon coming in, the Corporal forms the old videttes to the right rear of the post, and moving up himself, makes his report to the Non-Commissioned Officer Commanding the post, that the relief has been completed, &c. He then returns to the old videttes, and gives the word 'Strap arms, Advance by files from the left, Form on the right flank, March,' upon which the old videttes move into their places, and the Corporal also falls in himself in his proper place.

RELIEVING THE POST FROM THE PICQUET.

WHEN ordered out to relieve a post, the Non-Commissioned Officer in command of the relief gives the word 'No. — party, advance by half sections from the right,'* 'Walk (or Trot), March,' and when a little in rear of the flank of the post or elsewhere, according to the ground, '— form.' The Non-Commissioned Officer commanding the old post then gives up any orders he may have received to the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding the relief.

The Non-Commissioned Officer commanding the relief then orders a Corporal to take out the proper number of files for relieving the videttes.

This is done as already laid down. The Non-Commissioned Officer commanding the old post, as well as the relief, accompanies the Corporal and the relief, the videttes leaving both the old post and the relief under the command of the next senior during their absence.

When the old videttes have been formed up as already laid down, the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding the old post gives the word to the post, 'Retire by half sections from the right,' 'Walk (or Trot), March.'

And when a little in rear of the right flank of the picquet, '— form,' 'Advance by files from the left,' 'Move on the flank of the picquet,' 'March;' when they move up in their places; upon the old post moving off the relief takes their place.

* If only a portion of the party furnishes the post, the Non-Commissioned Officer will give the order to that portion only.

RELIEVING THE PICQUET.

THE ground being supposed to have been previously occupied, the number of videttes required will be known, and the picquet can be told off at once accordingly, as to reliefs, &c.

In other respects, the telling off will be as already detailed.

The picquet moves off to the ground as usual, and forms on the flank of the old picquet, or elsewhere, according to the ground. The Officer of the old picquet gives up his orders to the Officer of the relief.

The patrols will be sent to the front as before, but as the communication is supposed to be already established with the flank picquet, and the road to patrol known, patrols to the flanks, with intermediate files in the first instance, will be unnecessary.

The post, videttes, and signal-men of the old picquet are then relieved by the new, as already laid down; the Officers of both picquets accompanying the reliefs leaving the command of both the old and new picquets with the next senior during their absence.

Upon the relief being completed, and the patrols having returned from the front, and reported all right,

Patrols as usual, consisting of a Corporal and one file, are sent to the flank picquets; a Corporal of the old picquet is ordered to accompany each of the patrols, and point out the road. Upon their return, and after the arrival of a similar patrol from the flank picquet, the old picquet is moved back to its parade ground, and dismissed, the new picquet taking its place.

When one party of the new picquet is dismounted, as usual, &c. &c.

RECALLING THE VIDETTES, POST AND PICQUET.

UPON the Officer Commanding the picquet receiving the order to recall his videttes and posts, he sends an order to the Non-Commissioned Officer Commanding the post to 'withdraw his videttes, and rejoin the picquet.'

Upon receiving the order, the Non-Commissioned Officer Commanding the post orders a Corporal and file of men to move out and withdraw the videttes.

The Corporal gives the word 'One file on the right, Advance,' upon which they move to the front.

He then gives the word, 'Halt; Spring arms,' and when the arms are sprung, 'Walk (or Trot); March,' and moves off in the direction of the first videttes to be withdrawn. Having arrived at about forty yards or so in rear of the videttes, he gives the word 'Halt,' and moving up himself to the videttes, gives the word, 'Files about.' The videttes go about outwards, and then form in the rear of the file of men.

The Corporal then gives the word to the two file, 'Walk (or Trot); March,' and moves along about forty or fifty yards in rear of the chain of videttes, till he comes in rear of the next videttes to be withdrawn, when he gives the word 'Halt,' moves up himself as before, and withdraws the next videttes in the same way. The last videttes form in rear of the first, and so on till all the videttes have been withdrawn.

Upon coming in, the Corporal moves to the right rear of the post, and gives the word '—— form,' to the videttes,

and moving up himself, makes his report to the Non-Commissioned Officer Commanding the post, that the videttes have all been withdrawn. He then returns to the videttes, and gives the word 'Strap arms,' 'Advance by files from the left,' 'Form on the right flank,' 'March ;' upon which the videttes move into their places, and the Corporal also falls in himself in his proper place.

In the event of the post furnishing only a portion of the videttes and the picquet the remainder, a Corporal and file of men should be sent from the picquet to recall the latter.

When the videttes have been formed up, the Non-Commissioned Officer commanding the post gives the word 'Retire by half sections from the right,' 'Walk (or Trot), 'March ;' and, when a little in rear of the right flank of the picquet, '—— form.' He then makes his report to the Officer Commanding the picquet, returns to the party, and gives the word 'Strap arms,' 'Advance by files from the left,' 'Form on the flank of the picquet,' 'March ;' upon which they form up on the flank of the picquet.

Upon their being formed up, the Officer Commanding the picquet gives the word 'Retire by fours from the right,' 'Walk (or Trot), March.'

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE said nothing of the mode of forming the chain of picquets; I have supposed that the picquets are already posted—or else the point to be occupied indicated by the Officer Commanding the outposts—when the Officer commanding the picquet having moved to his ground with advanced guard if necessary selects a position for his picquet at the point indicated in accordance with the principles laid down in the regulations and the different works upon outposts. Placing the picquet, supports, intermediate supports, &c., depend upon different principles from those treated of in this elementary drill, and this duty will generally be effected under the immediate superintendence and direction of one or two senior Officers. But however possible an immediate and personal superintendence might be in the matter of forming the inner chains of the picquets and supports, the considerations of time and distance would render such an immediate superintendence quite out of the question in the more extended chain of posts and videttes. The object and intention of the present drill, therefore, is merely to bring the system of training up to such a point that the picquets having been posted the remaining routine duties of sending out patrols to front or flanks, posting videttes, placing posts, &c., shall proceed as a matter of course, under the superintendence of the picquet Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers. By this means these duties are carried on simultaneously throughout the chain, and will only require a subsequent inspection or correction here and there by senior Officers. If this

system of simultaneous action in the minor duties were not adopted, the time required for completing the chain of outposts would be greater than could in most circumstances be spared. I have said nothing also of patrols, &c. On a large scale the patrols here treated of are simply those to be sent out by the Officers commanding a picquet as a matter of course, and without any special orders.

The Officer commanding the outposts will indicate from what picquet the posting is to take place. That picquet will post from centre to flanks, and an Officer must remain with the flank videttes until the communication has been thoroughly established with the flank videttes of the picquets on both flanks. In establishing this communication, the Serjeants accompanying the Officers will give every assistance in their power. The flank picquet or picquets will then post from flank to flank, the Officers and Serjeants remaining with their outer flank videttes till the communication is fully established with the inner flank videttes of the next picquet or picquets towards the flank or flanks of the line, and so on till the whole line of videttes is posted. If the Officer of any of the picquets should arrive at the point which is to become the inner flank of his own line of videttes before the outer flank videttes of the next picquet towards the point from which the posting has been ordered, he must remain there till the posting of that picquet is completed, when he will establish his communication with the videttes on the outer flank. When on outpost duty, compliments should not be paid, or swords drawn, except in case of an actual attack, for the gleam of a sword can be distinguished for miles. All the rules relating to night duties will be found in the regulations and elsewhere, how the videttes are to be drawn in and reinforced, and the way in which they are to be posted from one to the other; in certain cases, how the locality of the picquet is to be changed, &c. &c.

SKIRMISHING.



SKIRMISHING.*

CAVALRY SKIRMISHING has long been considered ineffective. Warnery has said that 'Hussars will sometimes keep up a scattered fire for a whole day with very little effect.' Other authorities have made similar statements, and our own experience seems to have confirmed them. It has therefore become the generally received opinion, that no effects are to be expected from cavalry skirmishing.

But since this experience was obtained, and since cavalry skirmishing (except as a means of covering movements, reconnoitring ground, and watching the enemy) was condemned and discarded, circumstances have somewhat changed. Modern improvements have rendered the artillery more effective than formerly, and we must consider what is the best means of counterbalancing the great superiority gained by this arm. The contemporary improvement in the construction and practice of small arms suggests itself at once as one of the means of attaining this end.

Detached parties and skirmishers are not, as a rule, fired upon by artillery, and even if it were otherwise, the number of small marks exhibited would distract the fire and render it ineffective. Therefore, the approaches of the skirmishers are made in comparative safety: and, when once arrived within the range of their own small

* Part of this chapter has already appeared in the author's work on Cavalry combined with Horse Artillery.

arms, they may not only disturb and check the fire, but also cripple the action of the artillery by picking off the gunners and horses.

In taking up a position, infantry skirmishers may secure themselves against the attacks of small bodies of infantry, when not in sufficient strength to oppose them, by making a timely retreat upon their supports. It is to be supposed that our skirmishers can move as fast in retreat as the body approaching to the attack. Therefore, so long as they are nearer to their own supports than to the enemy, they may be considered safe. But if the attacking parties are composed of cavalry, this no longer holds good ; and in order to secure a safe retreat, our infantry skirmishers should be at a distance from their supports inversely proportional to the relative velocities of the attacking and defending parties. This would involve either an undue exposure of the supports, or else would increase the range to such an extent as to render the fire of the skirmishers ineffective. In this case, therefore, the infantry skirmishers must secure themselves by occupying broken and difficult ground, inaccessible to cavalry. According to our present mode of skirmishing, this latter means of defence is excluded when the skirmishing body is composed of cavalry ; but upon the supposition that our own cavalry skirmishers can move as fast as the attacking parties of cavalry, so long as the skirmishers are nearer to their own supports than to the enemy they may be considered safe.

The principal disadvantages attending cavalry skirmishing, which are supposed to render nugatory the effects of this mode of fighting, are as follows :—

1. A mounted man in the open forms a large and conspicuous mark to fire at ; and so long as he remains mounted, it is supposed that he cannot avail himself of the cover which might be afforded by the circumstances of the locality in which he is to act. He will, therefore, be in

this respect on unequal terms with the infantry skirmisher, who can not only take advantage of every description of cover, but can also fire kneeling, sitting, or lying down.

2. Formerly the arms of the cavalry man were of an inferior description, and of shorter range than the infantry rifle; and therefore in this point also the cavalry skirmisher laboured under a disadvantage.

3. The aim of the cavalry skirmisher is so disturbed by the unsteadiness of his horse, that he cannot calculate upon hitting his mark with sufficient certainty to make his fire in any degree formidable.

Such are the principal disadvantages.

The advantages are the following:—

1. The cavalry skirmisher can arrive at the point of action more rapidly than the infantry skirmisher; being also able to retreat more rapidly upon the support, he can venture further in open ground with impunity than the infantry skirmisher, who takes a longer time to retreat over an equal distance.

2. The cavalry skirmisher firing, when mounted, from a greater elevation than the infantry man, can see further, and also detect an enemy in ambush behind rocks, brushwood, or other obstacles, which would shut out the view from the infantry skirmisher.

According to the present system, as a counter-balance to the first disadvantage, the cavalry skirmisher is kept constantly in motion while loading, &c., and he only halts for a moment to deliver his fire. By this means he affords a moving instead of a stationary mark to the fire of the enemy, except for the moment during which he discharges his carbine.

As a general rule, a moving mark is more difficult to hit than a stationary mark; but if the moving mark passes and repasses the same point with a moderate velocity, it would be only necessary steadily to cover such point, and pull

the trigger just as the moving body was about to pass. A rifleman posted under cover, and at long range, might have full time and opportunity to take this course.

Most men, if firing at long range, would prefer a shot at an antelope or other animal when moving at a walk, and broadside on, than when end on and stationary.

Although a mounted man cannot get under cover exactly as the infantry skirmisher can, still there are means by which he may disconcert the aim of his adversary. For instance, by placing himself end on, or facing the enemy, he reduces the breadth of the target by two-thirds. If he cannot place himself behind a tree, wall, ridge of ground, &c., he may be able to place himself in front of such objects, or in shadow; and those who have taken long shots will know how a background may confuse the sight and disturb the aim. At all events, he can, in all ordinary cases, avoid taking up a station on a ridge, with the light clear behind him. A cavalry skirmisher, even when mounted, is by no means interdicted from availing himself of cover; a mounted man, on a well-trained horse, can take up a position behind a ridge of ground, rock, tree, or wall, as well as the infantry man.

When firearms are not to be used, keeping in constant motion may do very well; but as matters are conducted at present, such constant motion seems to have a tendency to make the men unsteady and impatient, and to keep the horses in a continual fidget; and this is not conducive to accuracy of aim and effective firing from horseback. But there is no absolute necessity that the cavalry skirmishers, if properly equipped, should always remain mounted. Asiatics, and men of other nations, manage to get out of their saddles and to get into them again very quickly; thus gaining the double advantage of proceeding rapidly to the point of action, and of firing coolly and steadily from behind cover when arrived at that point.

We shall now consider the facilities afforded by our present mode of equipment to a cavalry man in dismounting to skirmish on foot, in skirmishing on foot, and in mounting again, should the enemy appear in such force as to render a rapid retreat necessary, as well as in defending himself independently if pursued.

If the cavalry skirmisher should approach cover or broken ground, or for other reasons it becomes desirable that he should dismount to act on foot, the first thing he must do is to take off his right-hand glove and place it in the waist belt with the fingers down; he must then swivel and unstrap his carbine and seize it with the right hand at the gripe; he then draws the carbine from the bucket, and shifts it to the near side: all this requires a certain amount of time and steadiness in the horse, as well as expertness in the man, and generally the use of both hands in springing the carbine. Having gained the position above indicated, which, it must be admitted, is rather an awkward one if the horse should become unsteady, he dismounts; when dismounted he gives over his horse to his comrade, then hooks or straps his sword. It is laid down in the regulations that the men should be instructed to take advantage of the shelter of bushes, trees, ditches, &c.; they may kneel or lie down; but it is also laid down that during the time they remain dismounted their carbines are not to be unswivelled; this latter arrangement is not conducive to the steady and deliberate aim so strongly enjoined, or to the disengaged and effective action of the cavalry skirmisher on foot. Should it become necessary to return to his horse and mount rapidly, he must proceed as follows: when he reaches his horse, he takes the rein from his comrade, passes it over the horse's head, and unhooks his sword; he must then mount, and when mounted, if he intends to make use of his sword, he must strap and unswivel his carbine: thus, he must seize the

carbine at the gripe, and lay it in the left hand, then place the muzzle in the bucket, strap and unspring the carbine, and drop the swivel, put on the right-hand glove, and let both hands resume their usual position. But it is not laid down in the regulations how he is to mount with his carbine sprung: this is an awkward proceeding, for if the man throws his leg over at once, the carbine remains at the near side, and must be passed over, and if the horse becomes fidgety, which is likely, this is not easy to do, and if a man should be attacked while trying to effect it, he will be in rather a helpless position. I have seen men mount with the carbine sprung as follows: the muzzle is placed on the seat of the saddle, and the butt on the right shoulder; the man then places the left foot in the stirrup, and mounts in the usual way. In mounting thus the carbine is thrown over to the off side with the muzzle down; but this is a complicated arrangement, and the slightest unsteadiness of the horse, or inexpertness on the part of the man, will derange the whole proceeding. Putting the carbine to the off-side, and then mounting, is difficult under any circumstances, but more particularly so when the man has to throw his leg over the high hind fork of the saddle and the valise: if the skirmisher does not mount with his carbine sprung, he must go round to the off side of his horse, unswivel it, put it in the bucket, strap it, and then return to the near side to mount, or else unswivel it and take it in the hollow of the left hand when mounting. If he has at last succeeded in getting into his saddle with his carbine sprung, and finds it necessary to make a rapid retreat, we will consider what facilities he has of defending himself independently if pursued. The most natural course to pursue would be to use his firearms to check his pursuers while at a distance, and then to take to his sword when they came to close quarters; but he is not allowed by the regulations to fire except to the front

or left, and with the present equipment and training firing to the rear would be all but impossible. He cannot, therefore, use his firearm in the pursuit ; inserting the muzzle of his carbine into the bucket, and strapping it at the gallop or at speed, may be considered an impossibility. The average time occupied by doing so when the horse is halted and steady is equal to that occupied by the artillery in limbering up ; therefore, in order to get rid of his carbine and use his sword, he must sling it : this position is taken by dropping the carbine with the muzzle downwards behind the thigh, and leaving it slung or suspended by the swivel alone, where it remains in a position to bang about the horse's flanks, and render him unsteady and intractable, just at the moment when his rider requires to have him well in hand and steady, so as to have all the resources at his disposal free, allowing him to make use of his weapons effectively in making his retreating fight. Having thus got rid of his carbine he has to draw his sword, which at the faster paces is not particularly easy, for without a stay strap or some other arrangement, the hilt of the sword is apt to hang back on the short carriage so as to necessitate the man's swaying round in the saddle to reach the handle ; having got his sword in his right hand, he has been taught how to use it, but if closely pursued, it is most probable his adversary will press him on the left or near side. The directions given in the regulations to meet this casualty are as follow :—Should the attack be made on your left rear, a change of position can alone bring you upon an equality with your opponent ; it may be done either by making a sudden halt so as to allow him to pass, and then pressing upon his left rear, or by turning quickly to the left about, and thereby having your right also opposed to his ; but to do what is here enjoined requires that the rider's horse should be well in hand, and ready to answer all the aids of hand and leg to check a horse at speed, and

let your adversary pass you so as to enable you to press upon his left rear, or to turn to the left about, thereby having your right opposed to his, which involves the pirouette at speed, requiring much previous training and collectedness of the horse at the moment the evolution is required, are not movements to be effected with an animal irritated and excited by the previous process of mounting, and afterwards rendered unmanageable by the carbine knocking about his hip and flank. In order to obviate the difficulties above enumerated, I should propose the following modifications of our present equipment:—I should dispense with the bit head-stall and attach the bit to the collar head-stall, upon the principle at present adopted in the 1st Life Guards; I should have a light collar chain with a swivel at each end attached by one swivel to the bridoon ring on the off-side, passed over the horse's head-stall, through two leather loops on the forehead band, attached by a link of the chain to a circular spring on the bridoon ring at the near side, then passed over the horse's neck so as to form a chain rein, and again attached by the remaining swivel to the bridoon ring on the off side: this forms a chain rein and head stall. It can also be detached in a second or two, and by fastening the chain by one swivel to the ring of the head-stall it forms a chain for picketing the horse: when the rider dismounts to skirmish, he will first detach the swivel of the chain rein from the bridoon ring on the off side. I should also propose the following: saddle bags attached to the side boards of the saddle-tree to be substituted for the valise, the cloak to occupy the place behind the hind fork of the saddle now occupied by the valise; this leaves the fore part of the saddle free, enabling the rider to get his hand low upon his horse, and also admits of the following arrangement—two spring hooks are attached to the fore fork of the saddle, one immediately in front, and the other lower down on the near

side: the first is for the purpose of attaching the bit reins by means of a ring fastened to a runner on the reins; by this means the false and irritating action of the bit in the horse's mouth while firing off his back is avoided, and the horse being conscious of the usual feeling of the bit in his mouth, with a very little training remains perfectly steady, and leaves the rider the free action of both his arms in loading, taking aim, &c. This arrangement also admits of the mounted skirmisher loading and firing to the front, flank, or right or left rear at the gallop or at speed, the reins being attached to the spring hook as above described, the rider guiding the horse by the aids given by the legs, which is quite practicable if the horse is properly trained. The carbine to be attached, when the skirmisher is dismounted, to a spring hook fixed at a certain angle in a double steel plate, through which the waist belt is run by means of a steel loop placed at a corresponding angle in the stock of the carbine; there is also a circular spring attached by a leather strap above the knee in which, previous to mounting, the muzzle of the carbine just above the sight is introduced by a momentary action of the right hand: by this means the skirmisher can mount or dismount with the carbine attached; he can also detach it or spring it (attach it) in a second at any pace; on account of the angle at which the spring hook is placed on the plate, the carbine has been found to ride perfectly secure at all paces, while leaping the horse, and under all circumstances. The butt of the carbine passes between the right arm and the hollow of the waist; the circular spring, by which the muzzle of the carbine is attached, is so placed, that if the horse were to fall flat on the off side, which is not a likely thing to happen, the carbine would fall clear of the man's leg; whereas if equipped according to the present system, and a similar accident were to happen, the man could not extricate himself from his

carbine, which from its position would be likely to injure him in the fall; also, a man equipped in the manner proposed, if detached from his horse by any accident, carries his carbine with him, but according to our present system it remains attached to the saddle.

The hook on the near side of the fore fork is for the purpose of attaching the hilt of the sword; the sword rides in this manner quite securely, and can be detached or sprung (attached) in a second; using the carbine with the sword hanging by the sword-knot would be as objectionable as slinging the carbine, and both combined would, I should say, make any horse unmanageable, and render the rider completely helpless as to resisting his opponent. If a man drops either of his weapons he is certainly in a very unfortunate position in consequence; but if he knows the use of them he ought to be able to keep his hold of them, and not require their being tied to him; and although dropping his weapons leaves the cavalry man defenceless, still I think it is hardly worth sacrificing the efficient use of them to escape such a contingency, which ought to be a very remote one; we do not tie the infantry man to his weapons, and I think we might trust the cavalry man to keep hold of his without tying them to him. By the means proposed, the skirmisher can pass in a moment from one weapon to the other, springing his carbine and detaching his sword, or *vice versa*, and that at all paces.

There is an expense pouch in front of the waist belt, which enables the skirmisher to load at the gallop or at speed; he should also be equipped with leather gauntlets, with steel bars from the wrist to the elbow to defend the forearm; also on the back of the hand where it is not defended by the guard; the thumbs pass through loops in the leather, but the thumb and fingers are left free to load the carbine or to use the sword. I should propose the substitution of a black leather scabbard, with an

arrangement to prevent its wearing out, and to renew the leather if it should, for the steel scabbard now in use, as the former makes less noise than the latter when the horse is in movement, and a cavalry man can be detected at a long distance by the shining of his steel scabbard. Also a stay strap attached to the short carriage of the waist belt, which facilitates drawing the sword while the horse is in movement. There are other details connected with the equipment I propose, but I have only mentioned those which bear reference to the present subject. I should propose that all recruits should be trained to use the sword with the left hand as well as with the right. I have tried this for many years, and have never as yet found a man who was anything of a swordsman, who with a little practice could not do it sufficiently to deliver a sufficiently effective cut or thrust. At present a skirmisher in retreat, when his pursuer presses him on his left rear, is in a very helpless position, for while he is within reach of his antagonists, his own cuts or thrusts to the left rear, if delivered with the right hand, fall short; but if he can change his sword to the left hand he has the advantage of the full reach of his arm as well as his pursuer, and may check him with a back-handed cut or thrust, which, even if it does not take effect, will at least force him to parry, and in the meantime the pursuer's horse shoots past with the increased velocity which brought him up, and the opportunity of attacking in rear is lost. The drawing cut can be parried by the left hand as well as with the right. Equipped in the manner described, the cavalry soldier can dismount to skirmish on foot without any difficulty. He detaches the swivel of the chain rein from the bridoon ring on the off side, dismounts, detaches the muzzle of the carbine from the spring, draws over the chain to the near side, and gives it into the hand of his comrade; or what is better, gives it a couple of plies round the trunk of a

small tree, a rock, stone, piece of brushwood, tuft of grass, or anything he may find available for the purpose; and then attaches the swivel at the end of the chain to a ring placed about eight or ten inches from the extremity. With a little training a horse will stand steady when the end of the chain is simply thrown on the ground. It must be remembered that in the former case, when one man is employed to hold the horse of another, we have only one effective skirmisher in action, whereas in the latter case we have two. Dismounting in the manner described is only a matter of a second or two; and when dismounted, the cavalry skirmisher, unencumbered by the swivel attached to his pouch-belt, is, without reference to the range of his weapon, in as advantageous a position as the infantry skirmisher as to availing himself of cover, firing, kneeling, lying down, &c., with the additional advantage of being able to make a rapid retreat on horseback if necessary to do so. If such should be the case, he runs to his horse, hooking his carbine to the waist-belt as he does so; detaches the chain rein, if it has been fastened as described; or takes it from his comrade, attaches the muzzle of the carbine to the spring, and mounts. This occupies only a second or two, and when mounted he finds himself with both weapons ready to his hand; if pursued, he can fire to the right or left rear, and thus check or disable his pursuers. He can then spring his carbine, and in a second detach his sword from the spring-hook; or if he has taken his sword with him while dismounted, draw it and use it with both hands, in the manner already described.

The proposed mode of equipping the cavalry soldier would, I think, be found effective in the attack of artillery. If we suppose one portion of the attacking force of cavalry destined to engage the escort, another to act as a support, and the third to attack the artillery, a certain

number of men in the latter might be told off, in the event of coming to close quarters with the battery, to shoot down the drivers and horses attached to the limbers, while the remainder use their swords. As it has been already shewn that, equipped as proposed, the cavalry soldier can pass in the interval of a second from the use of his sword to that of his carbine, or *vice versa*, this may be attempted, whereas otherwise it would not be so practicable. A shot from a carbine at close quarters will completely disable a horse, by shattering the shoulder, or otherwise injuring him ; whereas in the mêlée, sword-cuts and thrusts may not be so effective, on account of the confusion, resistance, and protection afforded by the harness, &c.

The second disadvantage mentioned may be removed to a great extent by furnishing the cavalry skirmisher with a better arm, combining lightness with an extended range, or even by increasing the weight of the arm carried by the troops specially destined and trained for this particular service.

The third disadvantage stated is the unsteadiness of the horse, which disconcerts the aim of the cavalry skirmisher.

Unsteadiness is produced by the following causes —

1. The horses have been so accustomed to work in the ranks, that, while skirmishing, they are in a continual fidget and anxiety to get back again. Horses that have been always accustomed to work at close files will be shy and awkward out of the ranks.

2. If the rein is held in the hand while firing, even when the hand is run up and the rein is loose, the position of the bit in the horse's mouth will be changed ; instead of drawing against the corners of the horse's mouth, as is ordinarily the case, the action will be against the upper jaw, and a certain muscular and involuntary action of the left arm, in firing, will be communicated to the rein, and from the rein to the bit, at the moment that the trigger

is pulled. The horse will expect this action, and this expectation will probably lead him to keep his head in movement, and the muscles of the neck in action, thus preventing that temporary repose of the whole muscular system of the animal which would enable the rider to take a steady aim.

This will be more the case with irritable animals than others, and is produced even more by the action just alluded to, than by the dread of the flash or the noise of the explosion.

3. At ball-practice, the horses are brought in front of targets, and are surrounded by objects which tend to make them timid and unsteady.

4. The mode adopted for extension tends to excite and irritate the horses, and to bring them up to their skirmishing-ground in a fidgety and excited state.

It is proposed to get over the first difficulty as follows :—

During the first training of the remounts, at the end of each riding-school lesson, a certain number of horses should be formed up in rank entire, and a man called to the front by name, who should move out of the rank to the front, halt at a short distance and remain perfectly still, attaching the reins to the hook on the fore fork of the saddle, making much of his horse, giving him a handful of grain, and accustoming him by degrees to the snapping, and subsequently to the firing of carbine and pistol off his back, leaving the reins attached while using the fire-arm. The horse may then move about a little, and presently return to the ranks. By this means, the horses will be taught from the commencement to be content when out of the ranks, and to stand still when fired off.

Attaching the rein while firing, as described, will get over the second difficulty.

As to the third difficulty, if the men in the first instance learn thoroughly the use of the weapon they are to employ, including judging distances, &c., while dismounted, and if the horse learns to stand still while his rider takes aim and pulls the trigger, when firing with blank cartridge, and if a little pains are taken to accustom the horses to the targets and practice-ground &c., I see no reason why firing from horseback should not be brought to great perfection, the training of both horses and men being carried on step by step as in the infantry musketry instruction.

We now come to the fourth and last difficulty—the extension.

According to the present system, when the signal to extend is given, the skirmishers spread out at once in a single rank, at intervals in our service of about 20 yards, and in the French service of about 5 mètres, these distances being of course varied according to circumstances.

The skirmishers work at a distance of about 150 to 200 yards from the supporting body, and when there is an intermediate support between the skirmishers and the main body, it is generally at a distance of about 100 yards.

This is the general rule in most services, to be modified according to circumstances.

We shall now consider what each man has to do during the extension from a given point, and, for the sake of example, we shall suppose the extension to be made to the right; in which case, the left becomes the point from which the extension is made.

Upon the signal being given, the men are supposed to move out smartly and at once; that is to say, they are to extend at a fast gallop, and if there is a little dash about the movement so much the better, as it is supposed to indicate smartness and quickness in the men, and to show that they can ride their horses.

The horses soon get accustomed to this sort of thing, and expect it ; the moment the men begin to unstrap and load their carbines, the irritable and excited horses begin to fidget ; and when the signal is sounded, and the spur given, they start off, bolting, sidling, pulling, prancing, and all more or less in a state of excitement, which ill prepares them for the subsequent manœuvre of halting for a moment, while the rider takes aim, and fires off their backs.

At a fast gallop, and under the circumstances described, the skirmishers all move away to the right, with the exception of the left-hand man, who remains halted or moves straight to his front. As the man next to the point of extension gets his distance, he turns and aligns with the left file ; the next man to him, when he has got his distance, does the same ; and so on in succession.

As the men ride away towards the right, the point from which they have to judge their distance is behind them ; consequently, while riding forward to the right, the men must look over the left shoulder to judge their interval, and, in order to effect this, they must twist their necks, and partially sway their bodies round in the saddle.

This attitude, while at the gallop, is uncomfortable to the horse as well as to the man ; it throws the horse off his stride, impedes his action, and destroys the balance of the rider.

The horses do not know what the riders are about, and consequently do not accommodate themselves to the movement.

If a skirmisher is pursued, he must turn in his saddle to fire ; but, in this case, the action is but momentary while he delivers his fire, and the horse, if he has been trained, knows perfectly well what his rider is about. But, in extending, the men must continue in this constrained position, keeping the rear point in view till the

extension is completed. Add to all this, the many pulls and checks involuntarily given to the bridle, as well as the involuntary action of the heel and spur while riding in this way, and the sum-total will be quite sufficient to irritate even a quietly-disposed horse, and to render him impatient and averse to being fired off.

Unless in a case of absolute necessity, such as firing to the rear when pursued, &c., the men in all movements should look to the front, and sit straight in their saddles. A man riding in the way described, if not very careful, will produce an action of the bit, which he is unaware of at the time, but which may be most annoying and painful to the horse.

When the extension has been completed by this process, it will generally be found that some of the intervals in the centre of the line are false; and then follows a certain amount of riding about, correcting intervals, and shouting to bring back any number of skirmishers who may have gone away too far to a flank, which is all most probably occasioned by some man, on account of the unsteadiness of his horse, and his own bad riding, not being able to gallop in one direction and look in another.

The first thing therefore to be attained is, that the movement should be so made as to admit of the men sitting straight in their saddles, and of their looking in the direction in which they have to ride, and this may be attained by the following arrangement:—

A non-commissioned officer to be placed on each flank of the body about to extend, who has learnt to judge an angle of 60° , or two-thirds of a right angle, which is a very simple matter, and may be learnt without the least difficulty.

Let it be supposed, as before, that the extension is made to the right.

Upon the signal or word of command being given to

extend to the right, the non-commissioned officer on the right moves, at the angle stated, and with the increased velocity ordered, upon a diagonal line; the non-commissioned officer on the left, and the remainder of the skirmishers, moving straight to the front with a lesser velocity.

The right file keeps the non-commissioned officer moving on the diagonal line in view, by a glance of the eye and a slight turn of the head; and when the correct distance is gained by the oblique movement of the non-commissioned officer, the right file turns upon the diagonal, and moves upon a line parallel with the line of movement of the non-commissioned officer, always preserving the same distance from him during the extension. Each file turns when the file on his right has gained the correct distance, and so on in succession, until the extension is completed; when, upon a signal given, all turn to the front with correct intervals, and dress to the point of direction.*

It will be observed, in the first place, that according to the proposed arrangement, the skirmishers extend gradually and successively during the advance, instead of spreading out at once, as ordered in our Regulations.

The men have to look for interval and dressing to their right front, which a glance of the eye and a very slight turn of the head will enable them to do, without altering their position or deranging in the slightest degree their seat on horseback, or the aids to be given to their horses.

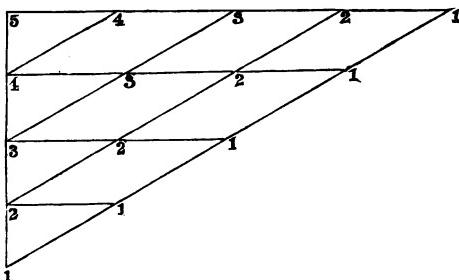
They need not trouble themselves about what is going on to their own rear, and they will have no occasion to look back, or divert their attention from the proper point of dressing, till the extension is completed, when they all turn together, and dress to the directing hand.

* If working with two ranks the front and rear rank men turn alternately, first a front rank man, and then a rear rank man, &c.

Dashing about in skirmishing order may have a very imposing effect, but true rapidity of movement is to be estimated by marking the time elapsed from the moment the extension is commenced, to the moment that it is correctly completed, and that the skirmishers are prepared and ready for renewed action of any description.

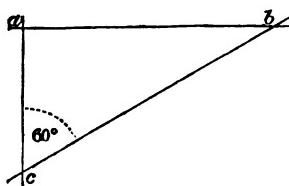
If we make the faster pace during the extension double the slower pace, the skirmishers moving on the direct

Fig. 1.



line $c a$, and its parallels (Fig. 2.), will always remain in line with the skirmishers moving at an increased pace on the diagonal $c b$, and its parallels.* Therefore if the advance is made at the walk (2 yards in a second), the extension must be made at the trot (4 yards in a second) and if the advance is made at the trot (4 yards in a second), the extension must be made at the gallop out (8 yards in a second). The extension will be completed, while the point from which the skirmishers extend (in the present

Fig. 2.



* $c b$, the cosecant of 60° = twice $c a$ the cotangent of 60° ; and $c a = .577$ of $a b$ the radius. (Fig. 2.)

case the non-commissioned officer on the left), passes over a distance of little more than half the line of skirmishers when extended; and this distance in practice may be taken as half the line of skirmishers.

If the extension is made from the halt, it will only be necessary for the non-commissioned officer on the right to turn to the right, and move in prolongation of the line of skirmishers formed at close files. As he moves off, the right file turns to the right, and moves off in turn, when the distance is gained; and so on in succession; and upon the signal being given, all turn to the left and dress to the directing hand.

The time occupied in the extension may be easily ascertained by multiplying the number of files by the distance or intervals between files, and dividing by two, which gives the distance described by the directing point during the extension. This again, divided by two, if the advance is made at the walk, and by 4, if the advance is made at the trot, will give the time in seconds occupied in the extension.

If we take a regiment of 4 squadrons, each 48 files strong, the front will be 228 yards, and if the line of skirmishers outflanks the regiment about 100 yards, the line will be 428 yards. Therefore, if a flank squadron moves out about 100 yards to the front, and the skirmishers advance to extend from that point, the extended line from that point towards one flank will be 328 yards.

Hence, while the directing point advances 164 yards, the extension will be effected.

About 21 or 22 files will cover the front; consequently, if the squadron advances about 100 yards to the front, and then one half extends and the other half forms the support, the extension will be effected at 164 yards from the support, in 1 minute 22 seconds when the advance

is made at the walk, and in 42 seconds when the advance is made at the trot.

Cavalry skirmishers may be employed as moving videttes, in front of the advanced guard or main body, at extended intervals, and at a considerable distance in front ; or to reconnoitre ground in front of an advancing line, and immediately preceding an attack ; in which case, they may prove of much use in discovering ambuses of the enemy, or in detecting difficult ground, which, although not apparent from a distance, might check the advance, and cause the attack to fail; or to cover and conceal movements of our own troops, in which case the intervals should be reduced so as to make the screen as thick as possible ; or to attack in skirmishing order ; or to cover a reconnaissance ; or, finally, to use their fire-arms against the enemy's artillery or other troops.

As a rule, the artillery do not fire upon skirmishers or small detached parties, but we cannot advance large bodies of skirmishers to the front without strong supports within reach, and upon such supports the artillery may direct their fire.

The more the artillery attain to accuracy of aim at long range, the further off must we hold our supports.

The longer the range of our small-arms the greater will be the distance from the enemy at which the effective action of a line of skirmishers may be calculated upon. Therefore, the improvements in small-arms will enable us to bring a line of skirmishers into effective action at a greater distance from the enemy than formerly.

The greater the speed with which the skirmishers can retire upon the supports, and the supports upon the main body, the longer will be the distance from the main body to which the skirmishers may venture to advance against the enemy ; consequently, on this account, cavalry might

be preferred to infantry, particularly in attacking the artillery in comparatively open ground.

To render cavalry skirmishers efficient, when using their firearms, requires some nicety of arrangement, management, and training; but if this could be accomplished, cavalry skirmishers, well armed and mounted, might do valuable service, when employed as one of the means to counteract the increased effect of the artillery of the present day.

NOTES.



N O T E S.

From Lieutenant-General Sir John Aitchison, G.C.B.

4 Devonshire Place, W. : August 3, 1867.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I return the papers you were so kind as to send to me yesterday, with many thanks.

I consider your little book a very valuable one—the chapter on skirmishing excellent.

Believe me, yours very sincerely,

JOHN AITCHISON.

From Major-General G. W. Key.

Army and Navy Club: August 3, 1867.

MY DEAR SMITH,

I am glad you are going to publish your little book on 'Cavalry Outpost Drill.' Having worked this system with you when in the 15th Hussars in India, and since then at home, I am convinced of its great utility and simplicity as a mode of instruction for all ranks in outpost duty. The skirmishing, though I have not seen it practised as suggested by you in all particulars, is, I am convinced, a great improvement, and a cavalry skirmisher may now be made effective and useful, and better able to defend himself than under the present system and equipment. I hope much benefit will be derived from your small book by our Light Cavalry.

Yours ever sincerely,

G. W. KEY.

From Colonel Crawley, Inniskilling Dragoons.

Colchester Barracks : August 3, 1867.

MY DEAR GENERAL,

I have much pleasure in assuring you of the high esteem I entertain for the valuable little work which you were kind enough to lend me a few years ago when in India, on the 'Duties of Outpost,' &c., 'of Cavalry,' and of which, you inform me, you are about to publish an amended edition.

I recollect the success which attended your efforts in the 15th Hussars twenty years ago, when we were brother officers together, to establish an intelligible and uniform system of instruction for the duties of light cavalry in the field ; and so impressed was I with the value of the principles and practice which you then laid down, and which were identical with those contained in your little book, that I have never forgotten them, and have adopted them, almost in their entirety, in the instruction of the regiment I have now the honour to command, during the whole period I have held the command of it. I may add that in February 1866, Sir Robert Napier, Commander-in-Chief in Bombay, inspected the Inniskilling Dragoons at Mhow, and saw the regiment occupy and defend three roads converging upon that cantonment, one squadron on each road, with a front of six miles of videttes, placed and instructed according to your system, and was pleased to express his approval of the rapidity with which the signals were passed from one flank to the other of the line, and of the manner in which the picquets and their supports were thrown out in skirmishing order, when the videttes were attacked and driven in by the fourth squadron in extended order. I have not His Excellency's General Order by me which he issued on the occasion, but, to the best of my recollection, I think he said it (the outpost duty) was 'admirable.'

It was all conducted on the principles laid down in your book, which, I am convinced, is worthy to be made the text-book of this branch of instruction in the British army.

Believe me, my dear General, yours very sincerely,

J. W. CRAWLEY, Colonel,
Commanding Inniskilling Dragoons.

From Lieutenant-Colonel Conyers Tower, 3rd Dragoon Guards.

Major-General M. W. Smith, C.B., late Commanding Poona Division, Bombay Army, was good enough to lend me a book he had written some time ago on 'Cavalry Outpost Drill.'

I had his permission to carry out this drill in the 3rd Dragoon Guards, and found it to work admirably in all its details, and is easy of comprehension for all ranks.

The great characteristic of this drill is, that it is a 'system' by which officer, non-commissioned officer, and dragoon can learn their exact duties when performing these most important services before an enemy, which I think is not laid down elsewhere for our guidance.

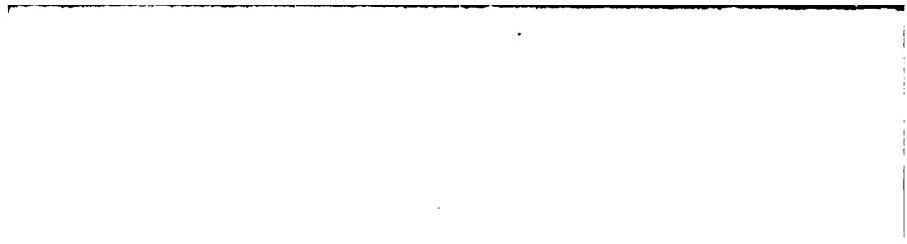
C. TOWER, Lieutenant-Colonel,
Commanding 3rd Dragoon Guards.

38 Victoria Road : July 15, 1867.

Inspection of the 3rd Dragoon Guards, 1866–1867.—Memorandum by Brigadier-General Sir C. Staveley, K.C.B.

Outpost duty was better performed than by any regiment the Brigadier-General ever saw; and this is owing to there being a system established. It would be even better if the non-commissioned officers were more practised, and the examination by the adjutant more frequent.

I could have obtained other letters or certificates to the same effect from officers commanding regiments in India and elsewhere, in which the outpost drill has been introduced and found to work well; but it is useless to multiply these sort of things, and it would have occupied additional time to obtain them.



[JULY 1867.]

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LONDON

PRINTED BY SPOTTISWOODE AND CO.

NEW-STREET SQUARE





